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#97

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Foremothers and Revolutions

I won't pretend this was entirely intentional—there are just too many moving parts for any given issue of *Razorcake*—but I'm proud all of the features in this issue are of women (Genesis P-Orridge is beyond classification). There are meaningful conversations about sex work, abortions, menopause, women's health, and transitional surgery. What does that have to do with DIY punk? In these pages, everything.

If you like Razorcake, please thank Esther Olympia Doman and Margaret Doman Taylor. They're my grandma and my mom, respectively. Esther was the reason I moved to California over twenty years ago. She was sick so I moved in with her. I really didn't do much to care for her. Mostly, we hung out together and enjoyed one another's company. Among other things, here's what she taught me: quiet strength, self-effacing humor, and humility. There was also a kick-ass pancake recipe.

My mom taught me financial responsibility at a young age. She started from fractions by cutting a hamburger into equal thirds, to balancing a checkbook, to explaining how credit cards and interest really work. One of the main reasons Razorcake hasn't gone down in flames is because we know how to work on a tight, realistic budget. It's not fun, but it's a long game based on small increments. Ethics rarely pay financially well.

These two women continue to be my guiding lights, even after my grandma's death. Both of them are embodiments of humans who are strong-as-hell, self-empowered, and way smarter than me. They are my role models.

I employ a working concept to my life: "Punk on its best days." It's the utopia to strive towards, where everyone is equal, where everyone has equal access and opportunity. I do everything in my limited power to not be reflective of the shitty ways less fortunate people are treated at all levels of society.

Yes, there a host of disparities in DIY punk and it sucks. (Today, I'm talking about women, yet this conversation could have easily addressed a host of other disparities.) Years back, I realized Razorcake had to actively shore up against the sediment of dominant culture. Diversity helps everyone. It makes people stronger and simultaneously more sympathetic. Razorcake had to conscientiously and continually invite, encourage, and stitch women into every aspect of its organization. I'm roundly disinterested in tokenism and genre ghettos. Diversity is an on-going, active process, not a slogan or a masthead. It's also the bedrock of Razorcake's culture beyond the page.

Donald Trump is an unholy anus, spreading a foul, toxic wind across the world. The silver lining is that we're getting a crash course in American civics and realizing, in many ways, he's nothing new. Unfortunately, he's the manifestation of the worst of America's failed experiments which have been brewing since 1492. Abigail Adams, a founder of the United States, in a March 1776 letter to her husband John Adams, could have very well been warning Cheeto Hitler instead of the Continental Congress: "If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice, or representation." She believed women should not submit to laws not made in their interest and said it 150 years before the House of Representatives passed the 19th amendment, which gave women the right to vote.

Razorcake would never had started if hadn't been for women. Razorcake wouldn't have made it sixteen years without women. Razorcake won't exist without women.

Past, present, and future.

–Todd Taylor

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"These are times in which a genius would wish to live. It is not in the still calm of life, or the repose of a pacific station, that great characters are formed." **– Abigail Adams**

L.A., 2017
Photo by Daryl

THANK YOU: It's like watching a highlight reel of people in amazing artistic form. "Wow, that's amazing," thanks to Lauren Denitzio and Ceethreedom cover design and photo; Illuminated rays of light on Donna's glove against a filthy Nazi thanks to Bone Dust for his illo.; Behind-the-curtain thanks to Mitch Clem for his illo. in Jim's column; Pug pictorial debut thanks to Steve Thueson for his deer-death illo. in Cassie's column; Chickens in hats would run the country better, no question, thanks to Alex Barrett for his illo. in Nørb's column; The missing link between **Dear Abby** ***and*** **The Exorcist** ***(true fact) thanks Jessee Zeroxed for his illo. in Dale's column; Somebody please make "Make America Ruckus Again" hats, blue, thanks to Bill Pinkel for his illo. in Chicken's column; "I will not cry in front of our friends" thanks to Simon Sotelo for her illo. in Julia's column; The importance of being seen thanks to John Malkin, Karoline Collins, John Lyons, Ines Peralta, Steven Stothard, and Eric Baskauskas for the Michelle Cruz Gonzales interview, photos, and layout; Total Tia Carrere worship, blind cat rescue, four seasons in each person thanks to Paul Silver, Rachel Murray Framingheddu, and Dylan Davis for the Bad Cop/Bad Cop interview, photos, and layout; Tongue-poking, splits-on-stage, decades-spanning lifer thanks to Ever Velasquez, Griffin Wynne, Antonia Tricarico, Eden Kittiver, Ceethreedom, Beck Rosoman, and Lauren Measure for the Allison Wolfe interview, photos, and layout; "You got breasts when you could have spent that money on getting me a new car?!" thanks to Nardwuar, Joe Klymkiw, Jeff Schock, and Becky Bennett for the Psychic TV interview, photos, and layout.***

"Girl Power's nuclear 7" is as fierce as Elizabeth Warren's stance on Wall Street bankers." –Simone Carter, Girl Power, Self-titled 7". Thanks to 97's rotation of music, zines, books, and video reviewers: ***Candace Hansen, Cynthia Pinedo, Griffin Wynne, Nicole X, Simone Carter, Kayla Greet, Mark Twistworthy, Sal Lucci, Ryan Nichols, Matt Werts, Sean Arenas, Art Ettinger, Mike Frame, Garrett Barnwell, MP Johnson, Indiana Laub, Ian Wise, Keith Rosson, Rich Cocksedge, Camylle Reynolds, Chad Williams, Juan Espinosa, Kurt Morris, Sean Koepenick, Steve Adamyk, Nørb, Jimmy Alvarado, Matt Seward, Aphid Peewit, Kelley O'Death, Matt Average, Billups Allen, Lyle, Ty Stranglehold, Theresa W., Michael T. Fournier, Jim Woster, Jim Joyce, Cheyenne Neckmonster, Tricia Ramos, and Jon Mule.***

DIY punk can't be fully captured, understood, or expressed by men. If you're a woman, womyn, girl, grrrl, transgender/agender/non-binary/ genderqueer writer who's knowledgeable about punk, punctual, and open to editorial processes, drop us a line about doing reviews, interviews, articles, or webcolumns for Razorcake. Diversity will only make us a better punk publication. Please help us out. (razorcake.org/contact)

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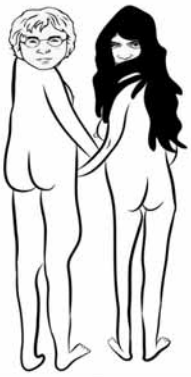

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Issue #97 April/May 2017
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This issue is dedicated to the birth of Nora Jane Mason.

COLUMNS

6 **Donna Ramone** *Never Let Me Forget*
8 **Jim Ruland** *Lazy Mick*
11 **Kiyoshi Nakazawa** *Won Ton Not Now*
12 **Cassie J. Sneider** *Here Comes Success!*
15 **Liz Prince** *I Don't Want to Grow Up*
16 **Rev. Nørb** *American Grilled Cheese Review*
18 **Designated Dale** *I'm Against It*
21 **Dan Monick** *Photo Page*
23 **Art Fuentes** *Chico Simio*
24 *Puro Pinche Poetry: Gritos Del Barrio*
Edited by Ever Velasquez and Nicole Macias
26 **Rhythm Chicken** *Dinghole Reports*
28 **Ben Snakepit** *Snakepit*
29 **Rachel Murray Framingheddu** *Photo Page*
30 **J.V. McDonough** *Boredom and Velocity*
32 **Chris Boarts Larson** *Photo Page*

FEATURES

34 *Michelle Cruz Gonzales* **by John Malkin**
42 *Bad Cop / Bad Cop* **by Paul Silver and Todd Taylor**
54 *Allison Wolfe*
by Todd Taylor, Ever Velasquez, and Griffin Wynne
66 *Psychic TV* **by Nardwuar the Human Serviette**

FAVORITES // REVIEWS

76 Top 5s *Cash to buy merch and support touring bands.*
78 Record *I saw squirrels have angry sex on a bed of broken chestnuts.*
104 Zine *Not bad!*
107 Book *The best resistance is to harness and nurture community.*

The following folks stepped forward to help us do our part over the past two months. Without their help, Razorcake wouldn't be what it is.
Todd Taylor, Daryl Gussin, Candice Tobin, Kari Hamanaka, Matthew Hart, Donna Ramone, Rishbha Bhagi, Chris Baxter, Steve Couch, Megan Pants, Ever Velasquez, Griffin Wynne, Seth Swaaley, Sean Carswell, Skinny Dan, Katy Spining, Jimmy Alvarado, Josh Rosa, Robert El Diablo, Mark McBride, Alice Bag, Marty Ploy, Rachel Murray Framingheddu, Rene Navarro, Billy Kostka III, Derek "Wash Your Hands, Even in a Hurry" Whipple, Samantha McBride, Jason Willis, Nicole Macias, Janeth Galaviz, Matt Average, Joe Dana, Christina Zamora, Juan Espinosa, Meztli Hernandez, Sean Arenas, Adrian Salas, Adrian Chi, Aaron Kovacs, Julia Smut, Jenn Witte, Dave Eck, Tim Burkert, Jeff Proctor, Nighthawk, Toby Tober, Sal Lucci, Jennifer Federico, Kevin Dunn, Maggie Egan, Jennifer Whiteford, Kayla Greet, Marcos Siref, Steve Thueson, Evan Wolff, Cassie J. Sneider, Bill Pinkel, Kurt Morris, Laura Collins, Eric Baskauskas, Bianca, Rhea Tepp, Russ Van Cleave, John Di Marco, Michael T. Fournier, Simon Sotelo, Susan de Place, Bryan Static, John Miskelly, Genesis Bautista, Andy Garcia, Camylle Reynolds, Becky Bennett, Craven Rock, Replay Dave, Adam Ali, Matt Sweeting, Chris Devlin, Codey Richards, Ryan Nichols, MP Johnson, Mor Fleisher, Ryan Leach, Tim Brooks, Patrick Houdek, Louis Jacinto, Julie A. Ferguson, Chris Boarts Larson, J.V. McDonough, Isaac Thotz, Kat Jetson, Noah Wolf, Jon Mule, Chris Terry, Ryan Gelatin, Jackie Rusted, Rosie Gonce, Brad Dwyer, Rick V., Kelly O'Grady, Marcos Siref, Scotty McMaster, Rayne Blakeman, Alex Harris, James KittleKamp, Jeff Khan, Punky Bowen, Sam Grinberg, Lukas Myhan, Melanie Matranga, Holly Horsebrowns, Bungee Degrady, Ollie Mikse, Dylan Davis, Becky Rodriguez, Gabby Gonzalez, Keith Rosson, Megan Razzetti, Paul Silver, Phill Legault, Matt Werts, Stacy Medina, David Ensminger, Danny Rust, Adel Souto, Clara Acosta, Dolly Chavez, Jamie L. Rotante, Daisy Noemi, George Lopez, Christine Arguello, Ronnie Sullivan, Cheryl Klein, Eden Kittiver, Shelby Fujioka, Jessee Zeroxed, Alice Elmer, and Cheyenne Neckmonster.

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THERE IS NOTHING MORE AMERICAN THAN PUNCHING A GODDAMNED, FILTHY NAZI.

Me Versus the Goddamned President of These Racist-Ass United States

"In this country American means white. Everybody else has to hyphenate."
—Toni Morrison

My column was nearly done. It was about how much I un-ironically love Cher. It was full of humor and other things my writing has been sorely lacking lately. Now it's a couple days until deadline and I have to address more racism than ever before. As the resident Muslim punk among us, I know my voice is important and necessary, and I know my intense feelings on everything happening are what everyone's ears need. So here we are.

Right now, it's me versus *the goddamned president of these racist-ass united states*. I have never felt so scared to be in this body, wearing this skin. The Muslim ban is fucking real. It fucking happened. You did it, white America, congratu-fucking-lations. A whole troop of dickheads are trying to claim banning Muslims is a perfectly reasonable thing we should do, while the other humane section of the population are protesting at airports and donating to the ACLU. I am constantly shaking with rage and crying myself sick. Like, I knew that "all lives matter" didn't include Muslims, but *fuck*.

This is Razorcake; this is common knowledge among us. I don't need to reiterate how no one from the seven Muslim countries banned have committed an act of terror in America, or that countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were missing from the ban list because Trump has business dealings there, or that Trump said Christian Syrians would be prioritized, or that this is the single greatest thing ISIS could have possibly hoped for. An actual fucking member of ISIS said, and I quote, "What is Trump doing to his country? He just become president and already people protesting against his policy, and worldwide countries [are] criticizing him. Trump will bring America down, God willing." *The genocidal mass murderers known as ISIS are fucking thrilled Trump is president*. Pause and reflect nice and hard on that.

The racist rebuttals I am regularly subject to are absolutely baffling. They're so stupid that I get more upset over the stupidity than the racism sometimes. My influx of hatemail this week generally includes:

"Muslim women are treated worse than cattle in Saudi Arabia and are murdered in honor killings." Hi, Shithead. I'm a Muslim woman who has been to Saudi Arabia, and its surrounding countries, hundreds of times. I cover up when I feel like, drive when I feel like it, wear as much makeup as I feel like, and generally do whatever the hell I feel like when I'm in the Middle East. Honor killings are something from the Old Testament in the Bible and have never been exclusive to the Middle East or Muslims. Also, they don't happen. The only time I am ever made to feel subhuman is from white dudes in America like you.

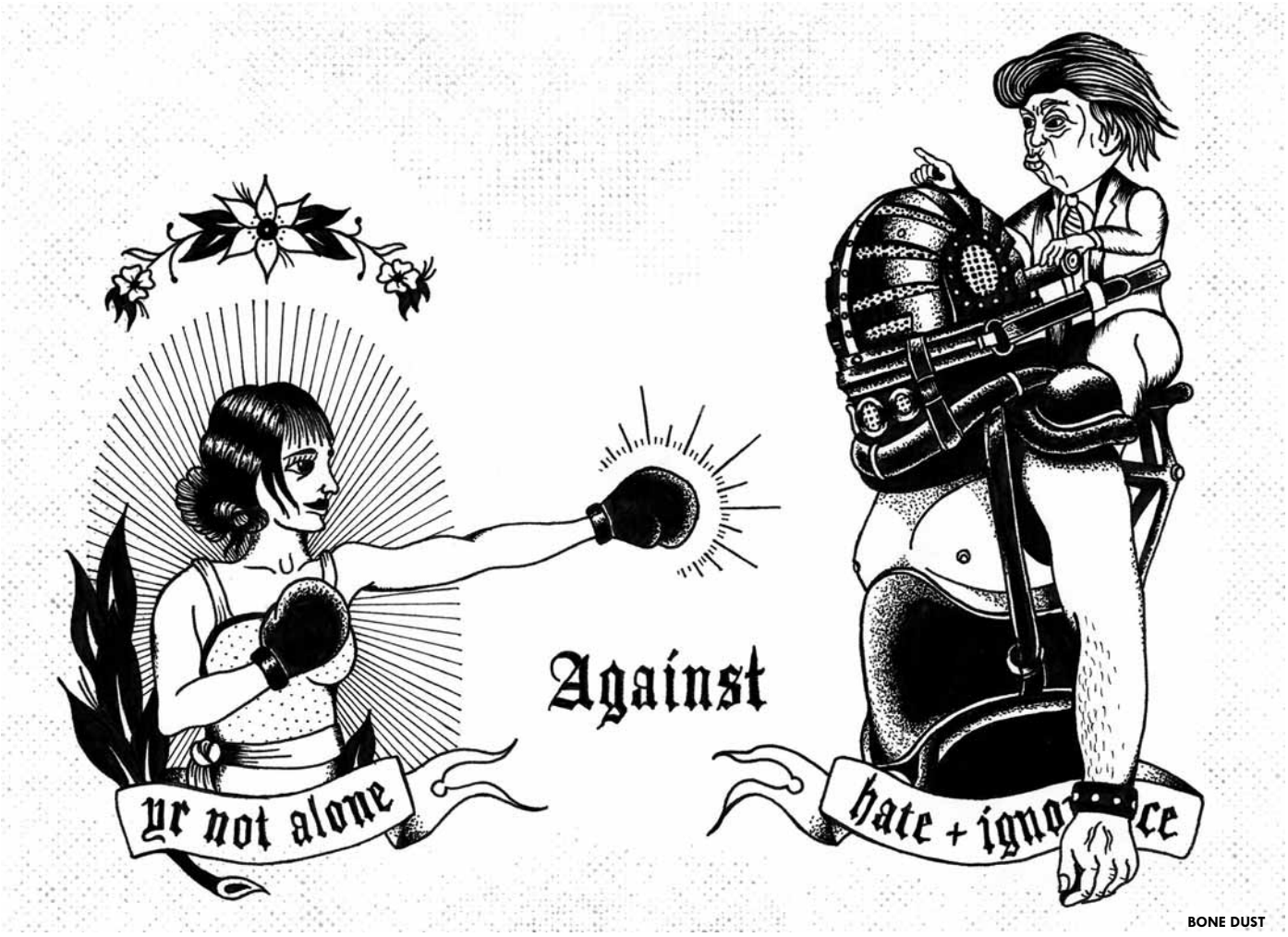
"If we had had the Muslim ban during Obama's presidency, everyone from the San Bernardino/Orlando/Boston attacks would still be alive." Hello, Dipshit. If we had had a Muslim ban from 2009-2016, all of those attacks would have still occurred because Americans perpetrated all of those attacks. Americans who were angry and ostracized because of people like you. Wanna talk about an imagined immigration ban? How about a 1492 ban on immigrants. Then you'd probably be somewhere not speaking English, and tens of millions of American Indians wouldn't have had to endure a genocide that is still happening today (#NoDAPL, water is life).

"If there was even one poison Skittle in a bowl of Skittles, we wouldn't eat any of them." Greetings, Asshat. People aren't disposable bags of candy, and correlating them makes you sound like a sociopath. These aren't wasted bags of Skittles, these are people you've condemned to death, people just like you, with families and futures. Do you believe in Jesus Christ? He would be intensely ashamed at such a flimsy reason for letting hundreds of thousands of people die. If you believe in a heaven that requires good deeds before entering (just like Muslims do), you're going to be in so much trouble.

"Obama did the ban first in 2011, that's where those seven countries were first named." Hi, conservative news consumer. Obama never banned refugees, or green card holders, or detained anyone at airports, or said Christian refugees would be admitted over Muslim ones. Two Iraqi refugees were arrested on suspicion of plotting a terrorist attack and the Department of Homeland Security discovered one's fingerprints had been found on a roadside bomb in Iraq. So the 57,000 Iraqi refugees in the U.S. had to be revetted and every Iraqi refugee from that point would require the further vetting. It lasted six months, refugees were still slowly coming here, and those who helped the U.S. government in the war effort were prioritized so they wouldn't find themselves or their families murdered for their work. And know what? I protested against that decision too, just like I protested the hell out of that fucked-up war *that is still going on, in case you forgot*. This isn't a competition between two sides, where you're Team Trump and I'm Team Obama. I'm Team Human and you're sounding like Team Asshole.

"Violence begets violence; we cannot resort to punching people." Hey, white devil. I'm going to put this in caps, because I would hate for anyone to think I wasn't screaming this as loud as my lungs will allow me to. RICHARD SPENCER WAS PUNCHED SPECIFICALLY BECAUSE HE IS A NAZI. AN ACTUAL FUCKING NAZI. HIS DECLARED POLITICAL STANCE IS "PEACEFUL ETHNIC CLEANSING." THAT BEAUTIFUL, WELL-PLACED PUNCH WAS IN DEFENSE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE AROUND US WHO HE WANTS DEAD. YOU WOULDN'T EVEN BE SAYING THIS IF YOUR FAMILY WAS ONE OF HIS TARGETS. THE VERY LEAST THAT COWARDLY WORM DESERVES IS TO HAVE HIS UGLY, CRYING FACE LAUGHED AT FOR ALL ETERNITY. THERE IS NOTHING MORE AMERICAN THAN PUNCHING A GODDAMNED, FILTHY NAZI.

With each passing second, news continues to break. The White House swore only about a hundred people were affected by the ban, since they're lying pieces of shit. It's more in the ballpark of a hundred thousand people. Some politicians are openly speaking out against the White House, refusing to comply and promising to resist. Others are disgustingly silent. Attorney General Sally Yates was removed from her post for going against the executive order because she knew it's inhumane and against the law. The White House was ready with a statement two minutes after firing her, which reads, "It's time to get serious about protecting our country." *When has that shit ever not been the most serious? The U.S. government literally spends over half of its budget on the military.* You know, the military that just completely



BONE DUST

This isn't a competition between two sides, where you're Team Trump and I'm Team Obama. I'm Team Human and you're sounding like Team Asshole.

botched a raid in Yemen that killed one Navy SEAL, as well as everyone in several homes, including anywhere between fifteen and fifty women and children.

Six people were murdered and eight are still hospitalized after a very white supremacist terrorist gunned down a group praying at a mosque in Quebec. Fox News and internet Nazis alike all reported immediately that the gunman was a Moroccan Muslim. Turns out, they just prefer to be racists instead of factual. Then, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer had the fucking gall to say, between his fake condolences, "It's a terrible reminder of why we must remain vigilant and why the president is taking steps to be proactive rather than reactive when it comes to our nation's safety and security." As my beloved Cher eloquently misspelled on Twitter, "SHAWN SPICER IS A BITCH!!"

There's a zine available on Razorcake.org (*9/11 Never Let Me Forget*) that collects articles I have written about my life as a Muslim woman. The PDF of the zine is free for anyone to read online or print out and distribute at will. I urge everyone to do so. I removed the swear words and confrontational parts and eased back the inherent "fuck you" tone of it all in an effort to create something my friends could give to their Trump-supporting family members.

But right now I'm too fucking mad to reach out to the fuckers who put me in this position. All I want to do is scream and curse and cry. I want to make everyone stop and listen to me yell about all the bullshit I constantly endure because of how I was born. This isn't just another upsetting human rights violation at my expense; this is open hostility towards me, my family, and people who dare look like us, from that stupid fucking tiny-handed, bloated Howdy Doody clownfuck president and his rich white supremacist handlers.

If more countries get added to this ban, I'm physically separated from my entire family. Then it's not just some executive order to create a false feeling of safety among white Americans. Then it's my mom and dad.

Then it's my mom and my dad.

–Donna Ramone

A family history is an investigation of hidden things.

The Neon Ones an Apocryphal Family History, *Part 1*

The first time I read my cousin's screenplay, *Neon Maniacs*, I got no further than the epigraph before I encountered a word I didn't know.

The epigraph read, "Here they come, the sons, the neon ones." The quote was attributed to "Apocryphal."

I asked Mark what the word meant. I don't remember his answer exactly, but he said something like this: "Apocryphal means something that may or may not be true, like a legend or a fable."

My cousin then made it clear the epigraph was not true at all, that he had in fact invented it. He designated the quote as apocryphal in his screenplay to lend gravitas to the words that would introduce his work to the world.

By inventing an apocryphal quote, Mark was attempting to create a sense of mystique about the monsters in his movie, the maniacs alluded to in the title.

The definition of "apocryphal," however, is a bit more nuanced than my half-remembered explanation. The word is usually applied to something of doubtful authenticity, though widely circulated as being true. In Greek, "apocrypha" means "hidden things."

As I set down these words about my cousin's life, work, and tragic death by his own hand, it occurs to me that all family histories are apocryphal. Many of the things we know about our loved ones who are no longer with us aren't true, per se, but intentional fallacies propagated to ameliorate the feelings of the living. A family history is an investigation of hidden things.

*

One of my earliest memories of Mark is the time he screened *The Exorcist* for me in his apartment on 79th and 5th Avenues in Brooklyn, New York. I don't remember exactly how old I was, but I think I was thirteen or fourteen, which would have made it the summer of 1983.

My cousin picked an intense film for my first R-rated movie, because *The Exorcist* very nearly received an X rating from the MPAA.

I wasn't ready for the horrors of *The Exorcist,* a movie about a young girl who becomes possessed by the devil and is transformed into a monster. The movie, which came out at the end of 1973, was based on William Peter Blatty's 1971 *New York Times* bestselling novel, and his adaptation for the screen won an Academy Award. (Blatty passed away on January 12, 2017, at the age of eighty-nine.)

The Exorcist tells the story of the expulsion of a demon who has taken possession of a twelve-year-old girl named Regan MacNeil, played by actress Linda Blair. It is regarded as one of the scariest supernatural horror films of all time. What made *The Exorcist* so terrifying was the notion of an innocent girl being inhabited by a monster: kill the monster and an innocent girl dies. The only way to save the girl is to exorcise the demon.

*

When we speak of the dead, we speak in untruths.

*

I was an avid reader of fantasy novels and comic books, but when I saw *The Exorcist*, I still believed in the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. I attended St. James Elementary in Falls Church, Va., for nearly eight years, and continued my education at Bishop Denis J. O'Connell High School in Arlington. I was well versed in the lingo and lore of Catholicism when I sat down to watch the film, and *The Exorcist* is a very Catholic movie.

I believed in heaven. I believed in hell. For many years I thought the best way to punch my ticket to heaven was to become a priest. What were a few decades of restraint, I naively thought, compared to eternal damnation?

I felt this way even though there was a priest in my parish who creeped me out. I was a paper delivery boy for *The Washington Post*. My job was to walk the streets in the dark, delivering cold war news and baseball statistics to my neighbors.

There was one house I dreaded going to. On Sunday mornings, the monsignor of St. James Parish would wait for me at the top of the rectory steps wearing a bathrobe that didn't quite come together with nothing on underneath. The first time it happened I thought it was an accident. The second time I made sure my gaze stayed away from his robe and fixed on his smirking face instead, which was worse. The third time he exposed himself to me, I was filled with shame because I was convinced he was singling me out for this treatment. He wouldn't do it, I believed, if he didn't think I'd enjoy it. I blamed myself for his transgression. This was something that years of Catholic education had prepared me to do.

*

I didn't expect *The Exorcist* to feel so familiar as I watched the movie in my cousin's Brooklyn apartment.

None of the heavily ritualized scenes of priestly voodoo struck me as strange, which made the horror that erupted from twelve-year-old Regan MacNeil all the more terrifying.

The Exorcist was set and filmed in Georgetown, Washington D.C., just across the Potomac River from my paper route in Falls Church, which used to be part of D.C. a long time ago. When the District of Columbia was mapped out as a perfect diamond, Falls Church occupied the southwest corner. Eventually, the Potomac was deemed too big an obstacle for proper governance. My hometown was sliced off the map and relinquished back to Virginia, which is why Washington D.C. is so oddly shaped, like diamond that has been gnawed on by some terrible beast.

Like Blatty, who attended Georgetown University, the slick cobblestone streets and row houses resonated with me. Eventually, when I became old enough to frequent Georgetown's bars and pubs—the drinking age in D.C. was just eighteen then—I'd get to know the place well, including *The Exorcist* steps, the stone staircase at the corner of Prospect Street and 36th Street, down which one of the priests in the movie tumbles to his death.

Georgetown was more familiar to me than my cousin's neon-lit loft apartment, which had hard floors, exposed brick, and very little of the creature comforts I associated with home. The part I recall most vividly is the bathroom, to which I immediately retreated after the movie.

MITCH CLEM

I no longer believe in heaven but I know there is a hell.

I remember sitting on the toilet, not because I had to go, but because I was scared out of my mind and needed to reassemble my reality. The terror I felt was real and was about to get much worse. As I sat there on the edge of the toilet seat, the shower curtain started to *move*.

There was no mistaking it. It was a tiny bathroom and the shower curtain was inches from my face. There was someone or something in the bathtub.

My skin turned ice cold with the realization that everything I'd seen on the television screen was not only real, but by bearing witness to its horrible truths, I'd somehow summoned it, and now that thing lay in wait for me.

I lunged for the curtain, convinced that Regan would be there with her blue face, bulging eyes, and bloodstained crucifix.

I yanked the curtain open, but of course there was nothing there. High up in the corner of the shower stall was a little window. I had never lived in a place with a window inside the shower, but that fact was insignificant before the enormity of my terror—ravenous, raw, and real.

*

For years, every time I went to use the bathroom at a party, I checked to see what was behind the shower curtain before I did my business. Not because I still believed in demons, but because my memory of that fright was so intense, that I never wanted to experience it again.

*

I don't blame Mark for scaring the hell out of me that day. Before he succumbed to his battle with depression, he was a bachelor in his late twenties who didn't understand that, as a kid from the suburbs, my upbringing was much more sheltered than his.

Mark shared my passion for low-brow entertainment, one of the few adults I could talk to about comic books, sci-fi movies, fantasy novels, and role-playing games, all of which overlapped with his passion for monsters.

He'd gone to film school at NYU. While he was an admirer of films by Scorsese and Coppola, what he was really interested in was monster movies. His first film, *Neon Maniacs*, is loaded with them.

But *The Exorcist* remained one of his favorite horror films. I can't help but wonder if the thing that scared Mark the most about the movie was the notion of demonic possession as a metaphor for mental illness: the evil disease that takes over the innocent host and makes it do its bidding.

At the end of *The Exorcist*, when the demon is expelled from Regan, it moves to Father Karras, who hurls himself out the window and down the infamous steps in a moment of selfless sacrifice.

Did my cousin think about this scene when he ended his life? Did he think he was sacrificing himself to spare his wife and newborn daughter?

*

I no longer believe in heaven but I know there is a hell.

–Jim Ruland

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AN ACTOR FROM THE HACKTIVIST NETWORK ANONYMOUS?
WAS IT AN ANTI-ANTI-ANTIFA ELBOW STRIKING THE NEO NAZI?
OTHERS CREDIT BLACK LIVES MATTER. IS IT POSSIBLE? AN ENTIRE GROUP?
KNOWN NAZI PUNCHER CAPTAIN AMERICA WAS REPORTED TO BE IN THE AREA.
KRAK!
DOES IT MATTER WHO PUNCHED THE NAZI? MAYBE TO AWARD A TROPHY TO?
PERHAPS WE WILL NEVER KNOW.
FEELS GOOD MAN.
KN 1/17

Insurance isn't going to pay for deer damage on the interior of a car!

Deer Toyota (Part 3)

Jessica and Laura determined that I was unfit to drive home. It was just as well. I was unfit for a lot of things, and, the older I get, the list has only gotten longer. Physically, I felt like I had just survived a heart attack, fought a mountain lion, and climbed out of a mineshaft: shaky and weak and my eyes kept feeling like they were adjusting to light. Mentally, though, I felt like a total champion. I had combed the darkest beaches of my psyche and come back to the other side—without blowing spit bubbles or stuttering.

Laura said goodbye to her friend and I loaded Pug into the backseat.

"It's you and me, Pugman," I said, covering us both with a blanket. The fifteen-hour drive to Austin sounded like a good excuse to take the kind of nap that happens when you're in junior high and you're on summer vacation and you have no friends and both of your parents work, so you just sleep and wake up and realize you just slept for eighteen hours, the same length of time an orthopedic bra lasts or for a Polio-induced fever to break; the kind of sleep where you feel like you broke a world record, but then you remember people in comas and other narcoleptic illnesses and then you feel both slothful and ashamed. I curled up in the back seat, and Laura and Jessica set off through Colorado, speeding off into the mountains, because all three of us had to work the next day.

It's really something else to be a passenger in your own car. It's like when your mom lets you drive for the first time, or a strong uncle unexpectedly lifts you up to see a parade. I made a fort of sleeping bags and looked out the window at Colorado, a state I'd never been to before now. Brown grass rolled on forever over mountains. Woodsy-looking cabins that appealed to the rustic fantasies of the wealthy appeared and vanished, giving way to the occasional gas station that looked like the last place on earth.

We stopped at a grocery store to get some food for Pug and headed off into the setting sun. We had to make tracks if we were going to get back to Austin in time for me to edit some rich asshole's college paper, or for Laura and Jessica make the night shift at the Rose.

"We made it," I said, settling into my nest of blankets. "The world didn't end yet." Laura played with the radio. Jessica tapped the brakes, easing us down the side of a mountain. "Nope, not yet."

The sun set in grateful shades of orange and pink. The little red Toyota drove into the sun, backwards into a nighttime that had already begun in the east of a world that hadn't yet ended. And I fell asleep, squeezed between a cooler, two sleeping bags, and a snoring dog.

**

I woke up when I heard Led Zeppelin, the last few notes of "Babe, I'm Gonna Leave You."

"I hate Led Zeppelin," I thought, critical even in the first few seconds after waking up.

"OH, GOD! WE'RE GONNA HIT IT!" I heard Jessica scream, then Laura, then the shuddering impact of something very large ricocheting off of the front of a vehicle I still owed $4,000 on.

"AAGGGHHH!"

"AAGGGHHH!"

I bolted upright in the backseat, squinting into the darkness, struggling to find my glasses. "WHAT JUST HAPPENED?"

"I THINK ITS LEG CAME OFF!"

"OH MY GOD! IS IT DEAD?"

"WHAT THE FUCK JUST HAPPENED?" The headlights closed in on a darkened country road, the car slowing down to about sixty, Jessica still gripping the wheel.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE WE HIT IT!"

"OH MY GOD!"

"JESUS CHRIST, GUYS! WHAT THE HELL JUST HAPPENED?"

"WE HIT A DEER!" they answered at the same time.

"WELL, PULL OVER!" Stopping had not occurred to any of us. I had not seen, but felt, the impact of the deer, so I was somehow the calmest of the three of us. Jessica slowed and the car shook over the rumble strips until coming to a stop.

I was the first out of the car, standing in the high beams, checking the undercarriage. The front of the Toyota was annihilated, no doubt, but there were no leaks, no unusual sounds. I shouted into the wind of an eighteen wheeler driving by in the opposite direction for Laura to pop the latch. I looked into the guts of my car. Jessica got out and stood beside me.

"It wouldn't get out of the road, and then it jumped at the car."

Laura stood to my left. "I think its leg came off."

"Guys, *we* could have *died*. That thing could have flown through the windshield, then where would we be? Nothing in the car is leaking. Nothing's making any noise. We got off way lucky."

"I'm sorry, Cass." Jessica looked at the headlight, broken under a twist of metal.

"Jessica, we could have *died*. The car is no big deal. Really." Truthfully, this accident now brought the car to the point of erosion where I no longer had to care. It was kind of a relief.

Laura stared into the grill, disgusted. "There's fur in here."

We all crouched on the asphalt and peered into the radiator. I stood back up. "How about I drive the rest of the way back? I'm awake now. Like, *really* awake."

Nobody argued. Jessica climbed into my nest in the back, and I clicked my seatbelt for safety. I restarted the car, and we drove slowly back down the highway.

"It just seems like a shame, you know," Jessica piped up from the backseat about a minute later.

"What does?" I looked at her in the rearview.

"To waste a perfectly good deer like that."

"Dude," I said. "C'mon."

Jessica and her two perennially unemployed roommates, out of financial desperation, had recently gotten into survival and living off the land. They had been working on building a sustainable mud hut and had been eating the leftovers of a wedding cake from a catering job for at least two weeks.

"All I'm saying is that Nate and Chris might want to wake up to some venison in the morning."

"Sweet Jesus, Jessica. You saw what it did to the car. That thing is probably in a thousand pieces by now."

"What if it's not?"

"If it's not, where would we even put it?"

"There's a blanket in the trunk we can wrap it in."

"I sleep with that!" I said. "Plus a dead deer isn't going to fit in the trunk! And what if it wakes up? Insurance isn't going to pay for deer damage on the interior of a car!"

"Can we just go back and check?"

I looked at Laura and she shrugged. I looked at Jessica, jaw set in the determined fashion I'd seen so many times, like when we cleaned out the garage for hours to have a place for our band, The Casual Fridays, to practice. I wanted to give up when I came

STEVE THUESON

All three of us stood around the dead deer, like *Steel Magnolias* meets violent redneck videogame.

across a nest of spiders, but Jessica picked up the gross, the moldy, and the recently deceased with no complaint.

I looked down the deserted highway and made a u-turn back toward what I didn't want to think about. "It was about here," Jessica said, and I slowed down near the scene of the crime.

"Yep, there it is." I stopped the car. Jessica and Laura got out to look. All three of us stood around the dead deer, like *Steel Magnolias* meets violent redneck videogame. The deer was basically intact, road-rashed, but definitely dead.

"*Fuck*."

"*Fuck*."

"*Fuck*. Well, you guys can do what you want." I walked back to the car.

"How are we gonna get it home?" Jessica followed me and I popped the trunk, which was still full of things I hadn't had time to move into my new apartment: a box of books, two pairs of stilts, a record player, a dog bed, a comforter.

"Can we use your blanket?"

"Where are we going to fit it if we wrap it in a blanket? There's no room at the inn," I said, digging around in the trunk for a solution. More bedding. A bike rack. "Wait a minute. Do you think we could get it on the bike rack?"

"It's worth a try."

And so, Jessica and Laura dragged the dead deer to the car and secured it to the bike rack while yours truly, the only vegetarian, puked her guts out on the side of the highway.

We all got in the car. Laura and Jessica rooted around in the back for wet naps to get the dead deer off of their hands. I flipped through my CDs for the right music, something respectful and somber to drive back to Austin as veritable poachers—three women with no real jobs, a pug, and a very recently deceased large woodland mammal. Once I found what I was looking for, I put the car in drive.

"*To everything, turn, turn, turn, there is a season, turn, turn, turn!"*

I was the first to laugh, then Jessica, then Laura. The pug clawed at the plastic bag that held the disgusting wet naps. The little red Toyota drove past the tall grasses and fenced-in ranches and burnt-out gas stations.

And the sun spilled over the horizon into another day that was all ours.

–Cassie J. Sneider

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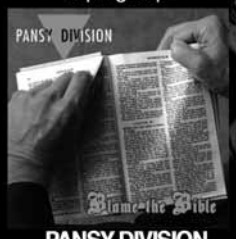

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On Saturday, January 28th, a bunch of cartoonists offered commission drawings in exchange for a donation of $50 or more to ACLU, to help combat Trump's Muslim ban. I ended up getting 60 requests!

Here are some of my favorites.

Thanks to all the artists who participated, and all the people who donated: together we raised around $10,000 for a great cause.

Keep fighting the good fight! ♡ LIZ

IF ONLY SOME PATTERN COULD BE FOUND IN THESE MADDENING STATISTICS!

OF COLONOSCOPIES AND KINGS

So I'm sitting in Kauai right now, serenaded by the dulcet tones of the island's rulers, the chickens. Hens and roosters run wild in the streets of Kauai, pecking with impunity, assailing passerbys with their exotic ruckus logs. There is no reigning in their madness. Their infernal cock-a-doodle-dooing appears timed to the sunrise several time zones to the east, and, as the local hoteliers (okay, more like moteliers in my case) eschew A/C in favor of open windows and a sort of glass Venetian blind set-up, dawn—apparently it's daybreak in the Central Time Zone now—is heralded by mass chicken ruckus, like being tortured awake by a cruel preschooler with a Fisher-Price See'n'Say. Now, I know what you're saying: *Rev. Nørb, wouldn't it have exhibited a certain not-inconceivable degree of foresight to have written this column BEFORE you went on vacation? BEFORE you were beholden to check-out times and airline departures and the silver-throated cluck of the islands? Wouldn't a modest degree of preparation before leaving have circumvented much of the day's anxiety and despair?* To be fair, Nutley, you make a shrewd point. Banging out my column prior to fleeing from my Arctic domain for ten days in the land of the humuhumunukunukuapua'a fish would have been, I admit, prudent and obvious. It was *so* prudent and obvious, in fact, that that's just what I did: For the first time in recorded history, *I turned my column in over a week in advance,* simply so my responsibilities as a non-profit punk rock blatherer could be checked at the arrival gate as the hula girl adorned my person with a lei (NOTE: No hula girl greeted me at the airport and adorned my person with a lei. Clearly, America has not yet been made great again). I am—also for the first time in recorded history—completely RE-WRITING my column (speaking of recorded history, globally, 2016 was the hottest year in recorded history. It replaced the previous hottest year in recorded history, which was 2015. 2015, in turn, was the hottest year in recorded history since 2014. OH, IF ONLY SOME PATTERN COULD BE FOUND IN THESE MADDENING STATISTICS!). Why the twice-chawn cabbage and Ahi Poke, you ask? Had I left all the vowels out again? Has the bite of the fearsome humuhumunukunukuapua'a fish caused some unseemly attention to craft to manifest itself within my otherwise apathetic bloodstream? Did I wish to polish this column until it gleams like a turd in the night, a beacon to the huddled masses yearning to breathe free (sorry, huddled masses yearning to breathe free, wrong number. This turd is occupied. Kindly breathe elsewhere. Also, it's "freely")?? Actually, none of the above, although I do reserve the right to claim insanity by reason of rooster ruckus. I am rewriting this column on my girlfriend's tiny notebook computer from a chicken-besieged hotel bed at the cluck of dawn because, simply, I made the grave error of writing yet another column about Donald Trump. Now, I don't really fault myself for stooping so low as to use the same subject matter two months in a row. These are extraordinary times (extraordinarily *shitty* times, to be precise, although I suppose sitting out on an island somewhere eating dried cuttlefish and drinking mango juice hardly qualifies as torturous), and even the biggest oddball geeks can't rightly be expected to think the deep thoughts on that mono mix of the first Ramones album —or on the discovery that the CD version of Hüsker Dü's live *Land Speed Record* album is not broken down into individual songs, but split into two tracks corresponding to the two sides of the original vinyl release, "Turbo Punk" and "Rocket Punk"—that humanity so desperately craves. Unfortunately—and it's unfortunate for more than one reason, I assure you—the fault in my thinking was not so much in bitching about Orange Mussolini for a second straight issue, but for *not realizing how quickly bitching about Orange Mussolini was getting dated.* Whatever ills, injustices and inhumanities I wrote about last week when the affronts were fresh and heinous in my brain have already been dwarfed and eclipsed by fresh new ills, injustices, and inhumanities. Simply put, *we cannot keep up with this fuckhead.* Anything I write today will be a quant time capsule of a bygone golden era by the time the ink hits the newsprint for this issue. In March, humanity will look back on me ranting about how shitty life has gotten on January 31, 2017, and mist over with fond remembrances of how wonderful life was back on January 31, 2017 (for instance, at the time of this writing, Orange Mussolini [do we upgrade him to full-on Cheeto Hitler yet? Or does he lack suitable facial hair for the job? Then again, when has a complete lack of qualifications stopped this asshole??], after ten days on the job, is going on vacation [apparently ten days of destroying America makes one week, or something like that]. So, while this asswipe is off having tea with the chickens and/or picking up his 19% of the Russian state oil company, I think we can all agree that this is a great time for a major terrorist attack on U.S. soil. Said terrorist attack, of course, will be masterminded and funded by Trump, Bannon, and the American government, but will obviously be carried out by terrorist flunkies from one of the seven banned Muslim countries, likely one or more with valid green cards. After said attack is executed, Trump can race back to the White House, say, *"Ah ha! I knew these fuckers were up to no good! Clearly America cannot spend even a day without my sage, just, and wise leadership!"*, put the nation under martial law, and complete the transition of America from a democracy to a fascist state [well, more so than usual]. I think we all can agree that this is gonna happen—the only question is *what city is gonna be the target?* Now, the obvious choice is Chicago. Cheeto has already threatened to send the National Guard in there because he's pissed they messed with his rally. Chicago is such an obvious target for the Trump administration's first sponsored act of terror against the United States that I think it's a swerve. I think it's gonna be Washington. Terrorists can take out the House and the Senate, a perfect setup for the ultimate Trump/Bannon power grab. Ah, but *then* again, it IS Super Bowl weekend—if Porky wants to manifest a stupendous flair for the dramatic, why not pay terrorists to nuke Houston during the game? Imagine the *gravitas!* Imagine the *ratings!* What better revenge on NBC, home of *Saturday Night Live,* than to give this sort of exclusive American Carnage coverage to CBS? Huh? Huh? So, Trump's first major act of terror against the United States is gonna happen in either Chicago, Washington, or at the Super Bowl. As I type this, I think I'm being really smart and perceptive for doping this out a few days early. As you read this, you're probably rolling your eyes and thinking something along the lines of, "Well, no *duh* the attack was going to be in Houston. *Everybody* knew that," and you'll be wondering why I even wasted your time typing this. As I said, this stuff dates poorly). So anyway, although I am tragically, horribly

ALEX BARRETT

No hula girl greeted me at the airport and adorned my person with a lei. Clearly, America has not yet been made great again

compelled to continue to keep writing about this fuckwad—if only for the benefit of any alien civilizations which, someday in the far-flung future, may encounter newsprint-scrap clues to the nature of the life that once existed on our dead, wrecked planet (other than the roosters—holy fuck, I just realized this is totally the plot of "Third Stone from the Sun" by Jimi Hendrix. Fucking great)—I realize now that, whilst I may be fitfully compelled to respond to current events, it is my sacred duty as a columnist to create something within these pages that can withstand the test of time—something eternal—something infinite—something with at least enough of a fucking shelf life that it's not merely six-week-old news by the time the magazine hits the stands. To this end, I have compiled the following list, which may be clipped and carried in your billfold in the off-chance that there is ever another election. Ergo and to wit:

A HELPFUL THOUGH NOT COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS THAT WOULD MAKE A BETTER PRESIDENT THAN DONALD TRUMP

The Iron Sheik. Obama bottle opener. The phrase "nibbled to death by an Okapi." King Tut from the *Batman* TV show. Wait, King Tut from the *Batman* TV show is already President. Okay, that one's a tie. The 'Okina. The ocarina. The Macarena. One large slice of mac and cheese pizza. Any major character from *The Wizard of Oz* that wasn't a witch or a lion. Henry Rollins, age four. Sovtek amplifier tubes. Sure, they're from Russia, but this time everybody can see through them. Most bobbleheads, other than Bud Selig. A Kepi Ghoulie drawing of a vampire. One bag of Marlin jerky, onion pepper flavor. Any 1959 Topps baseball card with a pink, black, or yellow background. Sterling Holloway. Hey, the guy was the voice of Winnie the Pooh AND the voice of Kaa, the python from *The Jungle Book.* He's a fucking bridge builder! Any fictional character played by Patrick Stewart. Ed Asner as Lou Grant (whatta world. Mary Tyler Moore is dead and Ted Baxter is President). A bit of silt. Steven Tyler. Painful rectal itch. A lone Yttrium atom. Tuberculosis. An egg sandwich with ketchup. Any luchador except for El Santo, because he's kind of a bore, although I suppose he would be an acceptable choice if he pledged to wear Groucho Marx glasses over his mask for the duration of his term. The song "A Swingin' Safari" by Bert Kaempfert. A small bag of airline peanuts. The four of spades. Monstrom, The Beast From The Bog! The blue guy from Rock'em Sock'em Robots. I always liked him best. A 1961 Chevy Impala, runs good, some rust. Canada. A pint of blueberries, if you're into that sort of thing. Ham Peggotty's lifeless body, washed ashore. Schnitzel with noodles. The larger of the two polyps they took out of my butt during my colonoscopy. Carnation Condensed Milk. *The Sirens of Titan* by Kurt Vonnegut. One large prop boulder from *Star Trek: The Original Series.* Any small plastic Houston Oilers helmet. A *Chutes and Ladders* board. Two Weebles and an egg of reasonably fresh Silly Putty. Christ, I'm almost at the verge of thinking even Mike Pence. Well, let's not get ridiculous here. The humuhumunukunukuapua'a fish. Seriously, the fucking Iron Sheik.

Fuck this.
Love,
–**Nørb**

The novel is guaranteed to make your shit run cold.

RIP William Peter Blatty

It seems there has been a rash of artists passing on, especially musicians and actors. I don't know if this is because it's happening with individuals I'm particularly fond of, or it's if there really *is* a rash of folks leaving this place. Couldn't tell you. It's the same way with any family or friends you lose along the way in life. What I *can* tell you is that they likely left an imprint on you and others while they were still around. The things they did in their lives that had a positive effect on people, sometimes a rippling effect spreading beyond their intentions.

There are also the bad things they may have done while they were still around, causing a vicious circle. With artists, well-known and otherwise, it's their personal accomplishments they share with the rest of the world that leaves an imprint on us, influencing other artists to some degree or another. This has been proven time and time again with music, starting back when notes, harmonies, and beats were literally being discovered. It's kind of hard to wrap my head around it when I think about it that way, the same way the late Lemmy Kilmister once explained that he actually remembered the era of music as a kid before rock'n'roll. (He was born in 1945, ten years before the golden age of rock'n'roll raised its fists with the holy trinity of Little Richard, Chuck Berry, and Jerry Lee Lewis.)

There's a long roster of fallen musicians that have left a substantial imprint on my life over the years since I was a lil' tadpole firing up my first turntable. Hell, this was when I still had one hundred percent of my hearing intact. My ears were still unscathed from the future onslaught of Marshall amplifiers roaring at practices and shows and the drums I continue to beat on to this day. They stole hearing frequencies one ringing ear at a time. Yes, this roster includes a lot of the old guard, the people who built the foundation for future genres and generations, as well as a handful of artists who left this planet sooner than they should have. But, this isn't about past songwriters or music makers. Anyone who happens to read this column, even on occasion, knows that I've paid respects repeatedly to those living and passed who have brought the beloved noise to the masses.

* * *

This time around, I'd like to call attention to an author, screenwriter, and director William Peter Blatty, who passed away due to complications with multiple myeloma (a cancer of the blood) this past January, just five days after his eighty-ninth birthday.

Born to Lebanese immigrants in NYC, William was the youngest of five siblings. When his old man left home when he was in the first grade, his hardcore Catholic mother was left to raise the Blatty brood, bouncing around to over two dozen residences during William's childhood. Rather than fall victim to the streets like a lot of kids in his position did, William stayed the path in school, landing a scholarship to Brooklyn Prep where he graduated as valedictorian of his class.

Snagging yet another scholarship to Georgetown University, he got his BA in English four years later. He soon found that the job market for teachers with his degree wasn't as happening as he thought, so he took up a few day jobs in the interim—driving and your cold calling shitty sales gigs.

After deciding to enlist in the United States Air Force, he worked his way up to a top position in the Psychological Warfare Division, which, in itself is interesting, if you're into the behind-the-scenes perspective of the propaganda targeted towards U.S. enemies during this era of wartime (raining leaflets, loudspeakers, et cetera.). During this time, Blatty decided to get his master's in English literature in 1954, before leaving the USAF and moving to Beirut as an editor for the United States Information Agency.

He also had two gigs at USC and Loyola University here in Los Angeles as a director of publicity, as well as a public relations chief. I can't help but think that if Blatty was a hardcore music nut like the rest of us, he'd might have had a go at a label as a publicity agent, but writing was obviously his bag. It was at this time that he wrote his first humorous autobiographical novel, *Which Way to Mecca, Jack?* that was published in 1960. It must be noted here that Blatty was also ghostwriting for Abigail Van Buren (the famed syndicated newspaper advice columnist, *Dear Abby*) just one year prior, in 1959. *Dear Teenager*, an award-winning book that Van Buren is credited for writing, wasn't written by her at all. It was all Blatty's hands that wrote the book, even though he was never credited on the cover. Dear Abby: Screw you!

1961 proved a pivotal year for Blatty as a writer. While still working the Loyola gig, he appeared on the Groucho Marx (look him and his comic career up, if you have no idea who he was) quiz show, *You Bet Your Life.* While his exposure on that show garnered no publicity for William as a writer, the $10,000 he ended up winning allowed him to quit his job at Loyola and dedicate his life full-time to writing.

It was from here on that he never worked another day job again. Getting a few more comedy novels published and under his belt, Blatty got his screenplay feet wet and wrote over half a dozen, starting from the mid-'60s. Getting back into his forte of writing novels, William was about to kick the horror doors off their hinges with his next book that was published in 1971: *The Exorcist*. Inspired by a 1949 case of possession he had heard about as a student at Georgetown (where Blatty ended up basing the book's story), *The Exorcist* became an international sensation. It held the number one spot on the *New York Times* bestseller list for over four months and remained on that same list for over a year.

I cannot recommend checking the book out enough. Without delving into too much detail about the book, it definitely weighs in more on the details and psyche of a few of the main characters, shedding a bit more introspect (as well as dialogue) that didn't make it into the film. Going even further, there was a 40th Anniversary edition of the book published that Blatty was more than happy to re-release with a few changes and the addition of a new character (!) that he always wanted to have included in the original 1971 version, but didn't have the money at the time to afford a second draft.

Knowing the novel would be an excellent idea for a motion picture, the adaptation of *The Exorcist* had Blatty

JESSEE ZEROXED

Suck on that, *Saw* franchise.
Your facocta Jigsaw ain't got shit on Pazuzu.

back in the screenwriting seat. To his dismay, not a single studio was interested in helping it make the jump to the big screen, often joking later on that he could wallpaper his bathroom with the amount of rejection letters that were sent back to him. That is, until some Hollywood executives noticed William making an appearance on a talk show where he spoke about his book in great detail. Warner Brothers ended up getting the gig, and soon Blatty teamed up with director William Friedkin (who also directed the iconic 1971 film, *The French Connection*), and history was made, yet again. *The Exorcist* first hit the theaters in December of 1973. (Even though anyone reading this has likely seen the movie—and if it gave you any level of the creeps—then the novel is guaranteed to make your shit run cold. It really is that great.)

Blatty ending up scoring an Oscar for best screenplay in 1974. The movie also received an Oscar for Best Sound. *The Exorcist* is also responsible for a horror movie being first in its genre to be nominated for Best Film, as well as setting current records for the ninth highest-grossing film of all time, and the top-rated R film of all time. Suck on that, *Saw* franchise. Your facocta Jigsaw ain't got *shit* on Pazuzu.

I want to personally thank William Peter Blatty, wherever he may be, for creating one of, if not *the* scariest experiences in my life on both printed pages and on the big screen. The impression *The Exorcist* left on me from the first time I experienced it at the drive-in as an eight-year-old kid, as well as making me squirm a few years later while reading the book, has made it one of my favorite stories to date. Godspeed, Mr. Blatty, and the next time you run into him, thank Groucho Marx again for those life-changing game show winnings. A lot of fans like me owe him big.

–Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com

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Dan Monick's Photo Page

Canoga Park, December 2016

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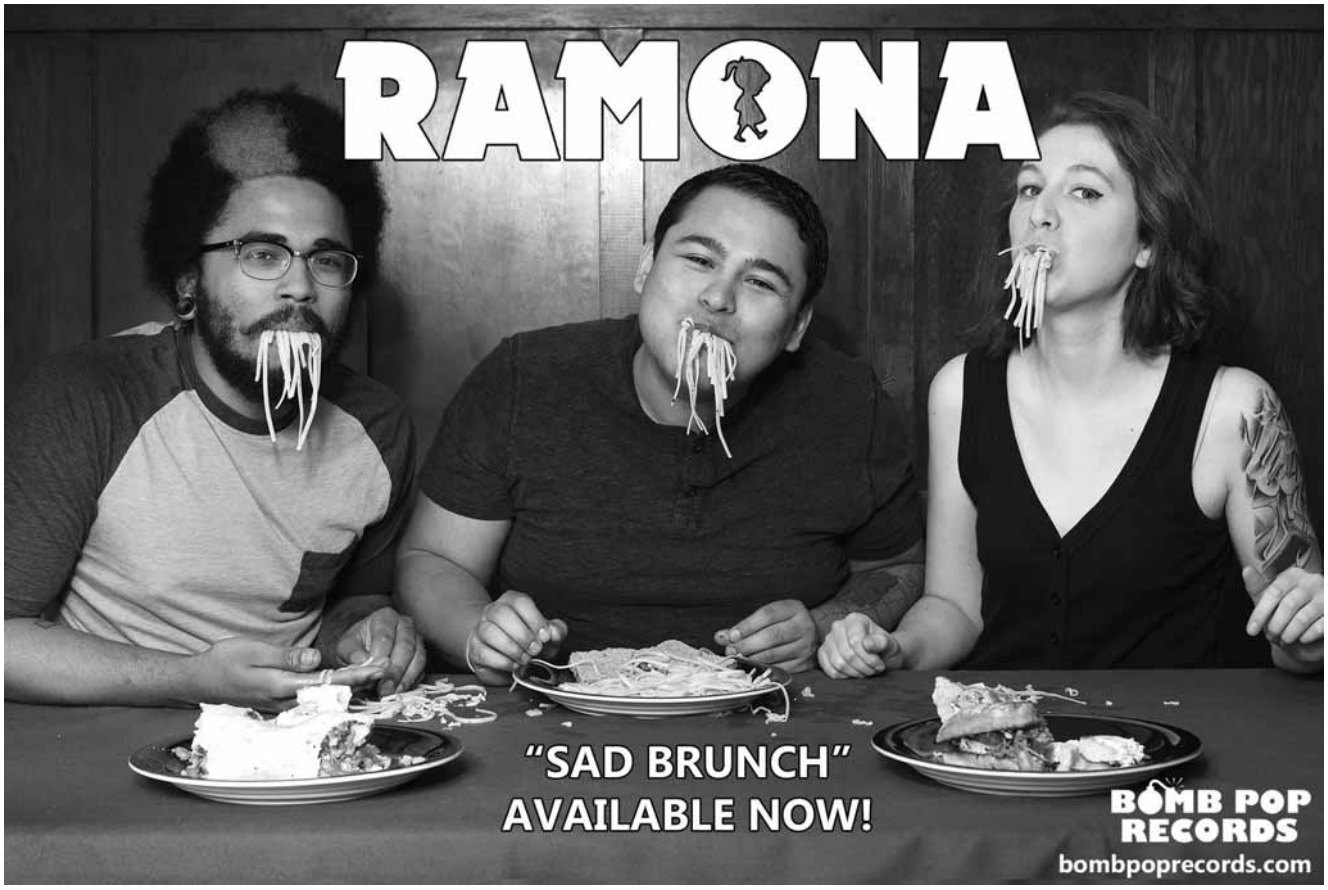


CHICO SIMIO

"I USED TO LIKE CHEETOS..."

·ART·

IT'S VERY EASY TO DESPAIR. EVERY DAY THERE'S A NEW INJUSTICE BEING DONE. IT EEELS AS IF ANY PROGRESS THAT WAS MADE IS BEING DESTROYED.

WE CANNOT SIT IDLY BY...

WE MUST ACT! WE MUST RESIST!

PROTEST! MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD! RESIST!!!

DONATE! TIME AND MONEY TO COMMUNITIES, CHARITIES, NON-PROFITS, AND LEGAL FUNDS!

MAKE ART!

TOGETHER WE CAN PUNCH THE HELL OUT OF THE ORANGE CLOWN!!

Truth is, your hero is yourself.

We Are Still Here

We are still here,
Our voices will be heard.
We are still here,
With pride, we stand united!
We are still here,
Remaining strong and full of light!
Don't forget that we have been here,
You erased us, but we are still here—fighting,
We are still here,
Forever we shall remain,
Tell' em all we are going nowhere!

–Esperanza Cisneros

Homegirls

In my humble opinion, to be a homegirl is to be caring, to be honest
Homegirl means: support, adventure, and love
Being a homegirl, sometimes means
Being a bitch, but in the most forgiving and funniest of ways
To keep it real, to not betray each other's confidence
They will come as relatives
In all shapes, genders, colors, and ages
A homegirl will never envy but instead be inspired!
A homegirl will not give up on you nor judge you!
Homegirls will teach, listen, and learn together
Homegirls don't take advantage of your kindness
Homegirls are tender while strong
They know to appreciate
A homegirl will know, if and when a time may arise, for them to have to walk away
A homegirl embraces your true beauty within
Homegirls will stay for reasons, not for seasons
They have patience for your friendship
Homegirls will play records together
They will photograph each other
They will go for boba, coffee, or a forty
Homegirls buy plants together, to watch them grow as their friendship does everyday
Homegirls will go dancing any given day of the week
Being a Homegirl is PUNK ROCK AS FUCK!

–Esperanza Cisneros
(chuchadoll93@yahoo.com, ig:@esaesperanza)

Frosted

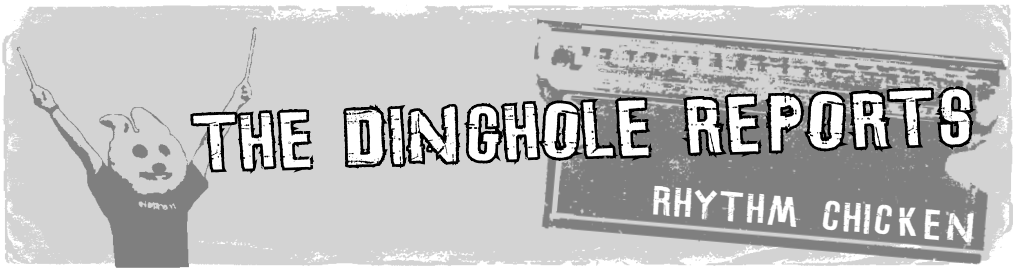
Not frosted up in this cold world or getting roasted,
toasted on their dosage.
I'm on.
I'm on the side of the ion that gains with positivity.
Posted, position your seat.
Gave myself a dosage but overdosed on good habits.
Habitual, accustomed to practice.
Action that out.
My usual.
Like a commonly customary.
Dance, not in accordance with their political convention.
Connect to conduct conflict on our contacts, convert.
You ain't on if you on their acts.
Convincing us violence is rule.
What should be Love Love.
True selflove, conquering.
Truth is, your hero is yourself.
Conquer your anger and hatred.
Love should be the core of all root, unlike rejection.
Love will determine the terms I put on all mine.
Miles fine on mine.
Line up, determine your battles.
Delete the deletion, they put on your soul to be lost.
Will you be a lost consumer?
Sum up your gravitational forces.
We pump theory in consumerism.
Increase what's economically beneficial.
Consumption is a movement, don't move that momentum.
Sum up your summary and summit your motives.
Affective, affectional on these emotions.
Motion, movement, motion.
Move into revolution of love.
Love is the peak of profection so protect your soul
and that's the top of your profession.
Progress is always in the process.
Mind body and soul that's your temple.
Tiptop your crown and rest on that crest.
Yes.

–Woo
(WooWooing@gmail.com, ig: @woowooing)

Muchas gracias a Esperanza Cisneros and Woo for sharing your gift as poets with us. Also thanks to Alma Rivera and Cynthia Guardado for making our first poetry addition to Razorcake a success. We would like to apologize to Cynthia Guardado for spelling her last name wrong. Check out Cynthia's poetry collection, *Endeavor* at cynthiaguardado.wordpress.com. Alma's newest zine *Love in Time of Trump* is also available at frijolerapress.bigcartel.com

ESPERANZA CISNEROS

You erased us, but we are still here—fighting.



A dark and deep blemish of shame now bruises the state I love.

Bully Rants and Tiny, Soft Hands

I will never forget September 11, 2001 and the weeks that followed. America and much of the world was sad and in shock over the loss. That day's events brought out the best in some people and the worst in others. One feeling I think most Americans experienced in the days that followed was a real sense of uneasiness and uncertainty. It affected so many of us on varying levels. Many people knew at least one person in New York City, and worry set in. People started really looking at their neighbors with caution. Radio talk shows aired many call-in listeners who were angered and ready for revenge. The America I knew has never been the same since.

It may seem like such a small, unimportant detail, but I'll always remember writing my next column for *Razorcake* a few weeks after that day. Up until that September 11, I had always written crazy, lunatic tales of drunken fun and tomfoolery. I was very hesitant to make dumb jokes about ruckus and drunken pandemonium so soon after many of our lives were tragically altered. Eventually, I chose to keep along my usual *literary path* of fart jokes and beer-soaked tales of childish punk rock lunacy. It felt a little disrespectful, but now—so many years later—I like to think that we all needed a little shot of fun distraction from the gloom in the news. The rants of ruckus rolled on undaunted.

This last November's presidential election was another pivotal event the world could not ignore. My Hen and I fell asleep rather early on election night, with a slight uneasiness in the air. Trump was actually winning some states, some big states, but I still felt rather certain of Hilary's seemingly inevitable victory. The next morning my Hen was up early for work. She briefly looked at her phone and then informed me in a deadpan voice that Trump had won. I was in total disbelief. The racist pussy grabber… *somehow* actually won. I checked multiple news sources, hoping for some kind of different outcome, but it was all the same. The orange raccoon had manipulated the electoral college in such a way as to get his slimy, saggy business ass into the White House.

There was that feeling again. I felt immensely sad. Much like fifteen years earlier, I again felt that uneasiness, not knowing what to expect in the days, weeks, or years to come. Granted, I wasn't the world's largest Hilary fan either, but suddenly I felt like we were all staring at a shit sandwich that we'd all have to swallow. Again, I felt awkward writing this column along my normal lines and not bringing up the dark path our country would be heading down. I kept hoping something, *anything* would happen to keep him from taking office: crazy lawsuit, meteor strike, alien invasion... *anything*.

So here I am, typing up this column just ten days after the *scrotus* was sworn in. My fears have been realized and multiplying almost daily. I don't think I have to write down all the horrible things he's done in just his first ten days. It's safe to assume you are all well aware of his unraveling of our civilized social fabric and simultaneously wiping his saggy, orange ass with our Constitution. I've come to the conclusion that I can't ignore or sidestep the atrocious news this time. The guy is a vain and dangerous pile of complete and utter *indecency* (and believe me, that's putting it far too lightly). I won't get caught up in an endless tirade of Trump-bashing, for I fear even the longest and most grotesque list of insults won't even come close to being accurate enough.

So there you have it. The Rhythm Chicken, so far, has gone 634 words into this column in a sad and disturbed tone. Not one frivolous, loony antic has been mentioned. I guess it really took a high-magnitude shit storm like this to get me to write something serious. It appears the doom and gloom on the current world stage has seeped into my normally light-hearted chicken scratchings. I never thought I'd miss George W. Bush. Heck, I never thought I'd miss *Reagan!* Lately, every day has been a new page in this horrendous dystopian novel come to life.

If you've been reading my columns for any number of issues, I'm sure you've noticed I have immense Wisconsin pride. Lately, there seems to be an annoying number of Republican notables somehow sprouting up out of my beloved neck of the woods. During the election, Paul Ryan and Reince Priebus were actually going against the Donald's grain from time to time. At times, I even found myself a little proud of our Sconnie G.O.P. applecart rockers daring to cross the orange raccoon. Then, once the nightmare scenario became realized, they all goose-stepped in line behind their new party savior. A dark and deep blemish of shame now bruises the state I love.

The ruckus of the people cannot be held back forever. Resist.

[Taking a two minute break to read the news that just popped up on my screen.]

Okay, so mere seconds ago I learned that the orange raccoon just fired our acting attorney general, Sally Yates, for upholding the Constitution and daring to cross his crooked reign. This is how fast the shit storm is coming down. I can't even write one lousy, depressing column for Razorcake without more and more bad news continually seeping into the margins of my laptop screen. Life is rapidly becoming more and more Orwellian. Sometimes I try to avoid all media outlets, but the continuous river of bad news still somehow trickles into my sight.

I recently overheard someone say something along the lines of, "Oh, but think of all the *good,* angry punk rock his presidency

BILL PINKEL

will spawn!" You know, I think I'd rather have the boring old punk rock from, say, two years ago just to have this dangerous pillar of vanity nowhere near the presidency. I hate to say that we're all screwed, but it truly seems as if we're all screwed. The dictator rules with blatant disregard for the people of this world, tweeting third-grade bullying rants with his tiny, tiny soft hands.

Pre-Rhythm Chicken Dinghole Report #3: Election Night Rock'n'Roll! (Pre-Rhythm Chicken Sighting #-15)

It was election night of 2000. The Figgs were playing at Quarter's Rock Palace in Milwaukee. I had recently moved to the brewtown and was ecstatic to see one of my favorite bands in such a cool small club. There was one small TV above the backbar airing the continual election coverage throughout the night, but all faces were on the stage witnessing the rock'n'roll majesty of the Figgs. Their album *Sucking in Stereo* had just been released and I already had it memorized.

Halfway through their set, Mike the guitarist called me up on stage and requested that I take over the drums so Pete could assume the frontman vocal duties for their new number, "Do the Bounce." The song started and I was, for one short song, drumming for one of my favoritest bands! Pete bounced. I bounced. The crowd bounced. Even at the entrance of the club, *the bouncer bounced*! The quick ditty was soon done. I gave Pete back his drumsticks, a large grin spreading across my beak.

Later that night, after the show, we all watched the little TV above the backbar. The election results had somehow changed from Al Gore winning to George W. Bush winning. We were all rather bummed, but those things happen. Someone has to lose.

This recent election, even though scrotum-faced weasel seems to have "won," I can't shake the feeling that we *all* lose. I will not give up hope, however. As bleak and empty as the future may seem, I'm already seeing seedlings of dissent. The ruckus of the people cannot be held back forever.

Resist.

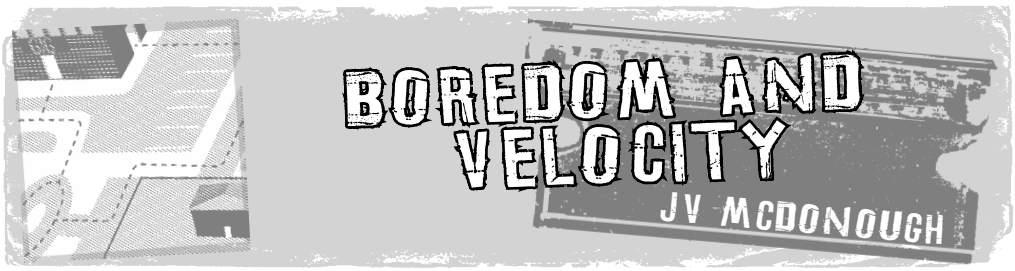
–Rhythm Chicken

MY EIGHTIETH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT

MY FAVORITE PROTEST SIGNS
FUCK THE WALL
FREE MELANIA
GRAB THIS!
WE SHALL OVER-COMB
I GOT 99 PROBLEMS AND WHITE HETERONORMATIVE PATRIARCHY IS ALL OF THEM
THIS EPISODE OF BLACK MIRROR SUCKS
FUCK OFF
TRUMP CAN SUCK MY GAY ASS
I'VE SEEN SMARTER CABINETS AT IKEA
FEMINAZIS AGAINST ACTUAL NAZIS
LOVE AND POWER TO ALL OF MY SISTERS AND BROTHERS FIGHTING TO RESIST THE MONSTER PRESIDENT
BENSNAKEPIT@GMAIL.COM

Rachel Framingheddu's Photo Page

You can not see the horizon but you can feel it burning.
Don't bury your eyes in the sand.
Keep fighting for us all.



We bring animals into our homes to teach us about death.

Those I Leave Behind

In one of my many aborted attempts to "better" myself, I once took a stab at learning the ancient language of my ancestors. I set to work, diligently writing down the most basic phrases and watching little YouTube segments. I gave up after about two weeks, my legendary lack of self-discipline aligning perfectly with my enthusiasm for quitting stuff. However, I couldn't help but retain a few things. I remembered "goodbye," mainly because if you are being formal, there are two ways to say it: one to be said by the person leaving (*slán agat*), and one by the person being left behind (*slán leat*).

Now, if you should actually look any of this up, language tutorials classify the second option as to be used "for the person staying." But I call that same thing "being left behind." I can't help it: ever since I was a very small girl I have had a real problem with the feeling of missing out. This has less to do with being abandoned and more to do with the sense that I am being left in the weeds while "they" are getting to go out and do the cool stuff.

The examples of the *slán leat* feeling are numerous and hard to forget: the childhood disappointment of watching the majority of my female classmates get to leave early to practice step-dancing for the big St. Patrick's Day show at my grammar school; the adolescent angst of standing forlornly outside of The Rat, hate-smoking Jakarta straights as my accomplices with fake IDs scammed their way in; the significant heartbreak of dismissing my first lover and watching his taxi pull away from our house for the last time so that he could start life in a new city. Left out, left behind—whether by bad luck, lack of preparation, or even personal choice—that particular groove in my brain is depressingly well-worn.

Leaving, on the other hand? What freedom! My troubles diminish in the rearview mirror as the road opens up in front of me and distracts me with the promise of the new. Even when leaving somewhere I love, the half-life of any sadness can be measured in hours. Does that make me shallow or just well-equipped for the randomness of my earlier life? It doesn't matter. Even now, in what I begrudgingly admit to be "middle age"—and with a strong nesting instinct and long-awaited sense of "home"—my circuits all light up when it's time to hit the road again. I can't wait to load the gear and go. Except for one part of it: leaving my dogs.

Dogs have been a central part of my life since I can remember. They were the only family I had as the benignly neglected youngest child of disinterested elderly parents. Dogs were the substitute for peers and friends in a neighborhood full of retirees and scary teenagers. They ended up being the canvas for an art I had a particular affinity for at a very young age. I started to train the dogs of neighbors and ended up competing in obedience trials with the help of my father, who showed genuine interest in me for the first time that I could recall. By age twelve, I had titled my first dog and was actively training several more. Meanwhile, my early teen years were filled with bullying as I walked my string of client dogs down the road to the fields where I practiced. I dreaded having to pass the usual contingent of local scumbags on the corner of Katherine Street. "Who's walking who?" "Look, it's a dog walking dogs!" "Fucking fag, you should kill yourself!"

I'd narrow my eyes and focus on keeping the pack heeling past. I wouldn't cry. I'd get insanely angry, envisioning gloriously detailed violent revenge on the hecklers. But once I got to the field, the dogs (Roxie, Kristoffer, Elsa: names I recall better and with more fondness than any humans from that time) would help me move past it. Together we'd work out problems, we'd move in concert, they would teach me patience and process and connection in the way I hadn't experienced with people. They saved me and I never lived without them again.

My life dating back to that period can be measured in a long, nearly unbroken string of canine familiars. Even as I moved haphazardly from one place to the next, there would usually be a dog there to translate the sometimes incomprehensible world back to me in the necessities of food/motion/sleep, the quiet presence of another heartbeat near mine even when I wouldn't let a human being get anywhere close.

Today I live with a dog pack of three, including Gretsch, a nearly ten-year-old male Dobermann. He is the one that dog people would refer to as a "heart dog." Ever since he was a squirmy eight-week-old pup who boldly ran into my arms when I first met his family, we have been connected on a level that I've been lucky to experience only a few times in my long history with his species. It's a relationship of trust, silent communication, and joyful interspecies in-jokes that only blossomed more as we worked together as partners.

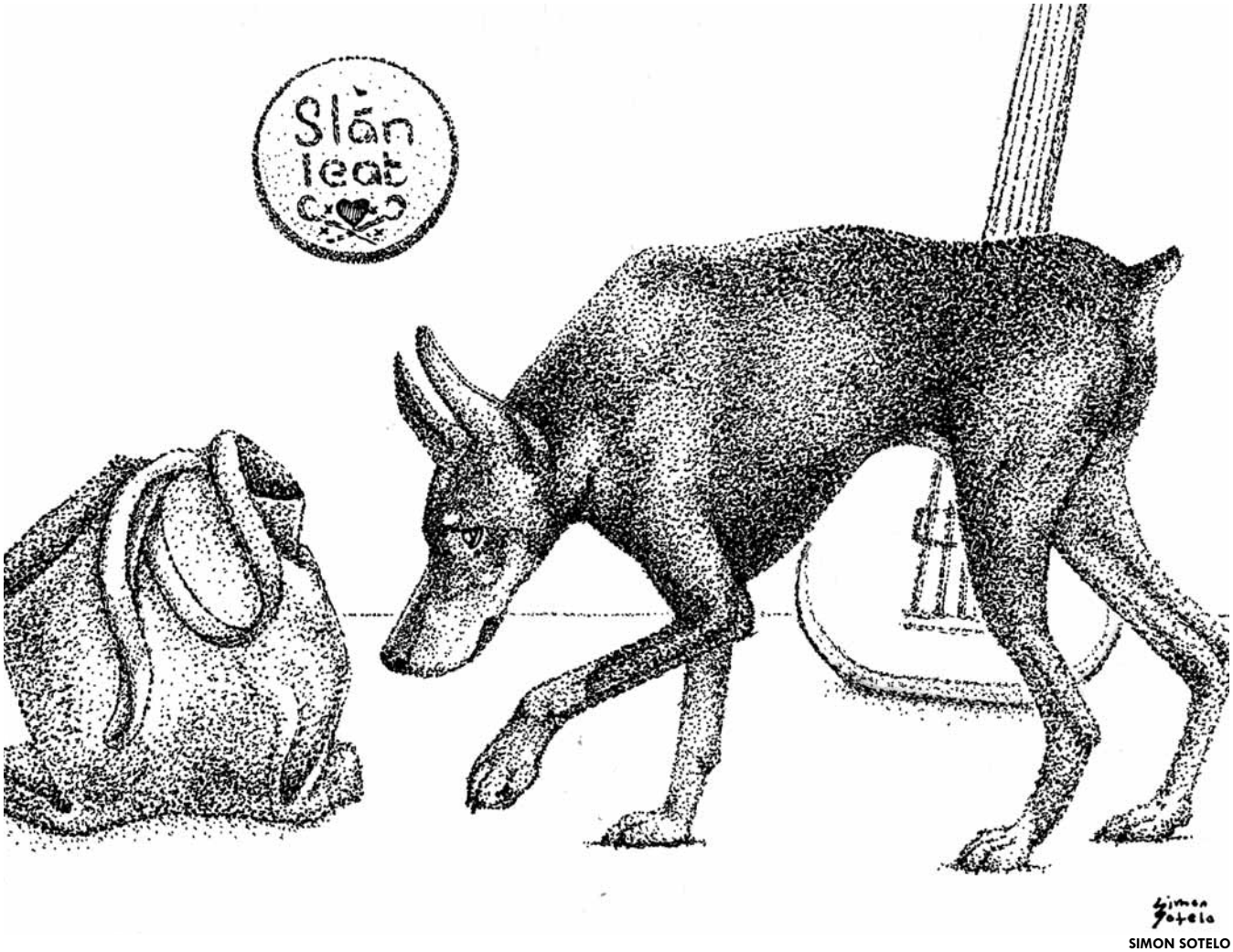
Ten is old for a Dobe. I have lost many of his tribe at a much younger age to cancer, to mishap, and to the curse of the breed: heart failure. Gretsch is graying around the muzzle now. His once fearsome teeth are dull. There are clouds in the soulful, dark eyes that are otherwise so full of purpose and intelligence. On the surface, he is fit, athletic even. I remind myself of that as I watch him hurtle over fallen logs in the woods, as he wrestles with his young dog friend Rae. He is healthy, I am lucky, we are good just as we are. The greatest challenge to this precarious sense of stability is when it's time to tour.

When my husband Paul and I travel, our dogs remain at home, a luxury made possible by the help of my ex-husband, who stays with them and keeps an eye on things. Their schedules are the same and they are with a person they trust. It's an ideal arrangement. Even with this in mind, the days leading up to departure are tinged with anxiety. And I must keep that anxiety hidden from the ones who inspire it. Gretsch knows when he sees me bustling from room to room, gathering things up. When the suitcase joins the instruments and the merch bag, he knows even though I don't say a word. When I leave, I try to make my hug and my whispered "I love you, Stretchy" as cheerful as possible. He will not "miss" us—I know that from experience. He will simply be overjoyed when we return. But, oh, the swallowed tears as we pull out of the drive.

In June, 2013 we were wrapping up M.O.T.O.'s first tour of China, which took us to Hong Kong as well as many major cities. I was in love with China from the very beginning and spent most of my free time there in slack-jawed happiness at my luck. New Hampshire couldn't be farther away, literally or figuratively. Communication with our friends back home was minimal and it was easy to become lost in the exotic day-to-day of tour.

We had just finished playing a rowdy show in Hong Kong and were returning to the rather nice hotel room we'd treated ourselves to when I turned on my phone and saw a text. Three weeks' worth of good feelings were vaporized with five words: "Gretsch very sick, call home."

The details are now lost to memory but the blacked-out, hopeless sensation I felt



SIMON SOTELO

I can't wait to load the gear and go. Except for one part of it: leaving my dogs.

while hearing words like "blood loss" and "might be cancer" still resonates. My boy, my heart dog, dying eight thousand miles away. We still had another show to do on the mainland and another couple of days before we could fly home. This was my worst nightmare, the scene my anxiety had been rehearsing for years.

A phone conversation back home settled my nerves only a little. Another with my vet reassured me that Gretsch was stable. He wasn't in immediate danger but he was gravely ill and, so far, there was no diagnosis. I managed to play that last show only by drinking myself into denial and slamming the door on any wistful thoughts with another slug of Jack and a silent, angry mantra of *I WILL NOT CRY IN FRONT OF OUR FRIENDS*. All of those willfully held back tears burst forth the minute I got back to our room: *My boy. I left him and he will die.*

But Gretsch lived. As I write this, he is lying next to me. The mysterious thing that almost killed him was a strange autoimmune disease, which responded to the drugs they put him on. That experience drained me and it trained me: expect these things. There's some quote that says something like, "We bring animals into our homes to teach us about death." My line of work has let me learn the lesson again and again. It never gets easier. I thought for sure I would have learned a particularly cruel variant of it in June 2013, but Gretsch was spared and so was I.

We'll be hitting the road again soon on our annual tour where we spend time with family in New Orleans for Mardi Gras, a high point of my year. But, as always, there's the undertow of anxiety at leaving my dogs, even as the promise of a great time beckons. Gretsch is an old dog now. I know that someday soon I will choose to stay home with him and his packmates, to be the one who says "slán leat" as my husband and my band family leave me behind. Like all major choices, it will conflict me. I know there will be moments when I'll get that dreaded "missing out" feeling. But this time there will be a cure for it. Even if I miss out on a tour, I will be fully present for this small, quiet part of my life that loves me back. *He is healthy, I am lucky, we are good just as we are.* And that isn't missing out at all.

–J.V. McDonough

Chris Boarts Larson Photo Column - Girl Rock!

Chris Boarts Larson, www.slugandlettuce.net | fb.me/slugandlettuce

Girls Rock! RVA and Be Bad Weekend, Richmond VA 1.21.17

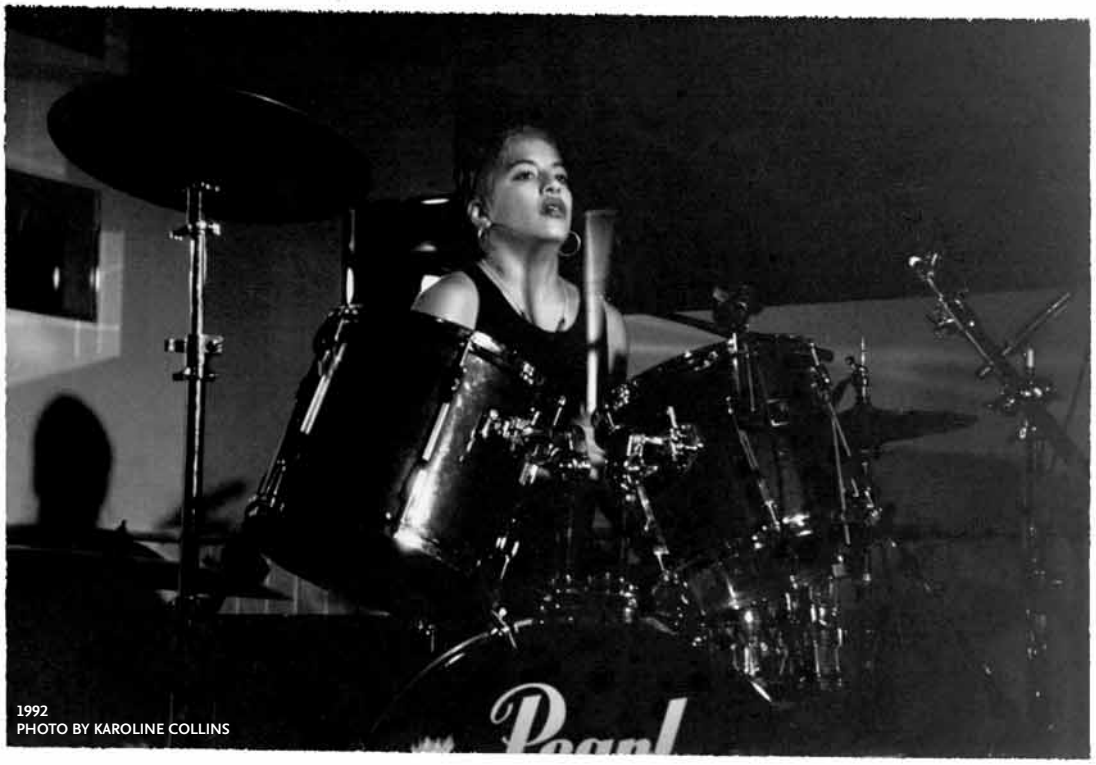
On Saturday January 21, 2017 while women were marching in cities across the world in a show of solidarity with the Women's March in DC, we had our own celebration of women. The "Be Bad Weekend" was a three-day music festival in RVA celebrating women in punk and hardcore. This annual weekend of shows was also a benefit for Girls Rock! RVA, a summer camp program which empowers girls, gender non-conforming, and trans youth through music, art, and activism.

It was inspiring to see so many bands fronted by women, to learn about so many new bands, and to see so many ladies filling the club. It was a powerful day celebrating woman, their power, strength, voices. Every band was awesome and a wonderful, diverse cross section of the current punk and hardcore scene.

The bands that are pictured here are Maudlin, Asylum, Sow, Nosebleed, Rare Form, Petrichor, Roy Batty, and S-21.
Maudlin (Atlanta) **maudlinband.bandcamp.com**
Asylum (RVA/Baltimore) **asylum-rva.bandcamp.com**
Sow (RVA/Charlottesville) - First show!
Nosebleed (RVA) **nosebleedrva.bandcamp.com**
Rare Form (CT) **rareformhc.bandcamp.com**
Petrichor (RVA) **petrichorva.bandcamp.com**
Roy Batty (RVA) - First show!
S-21 (Philly) **s-21.bandcamp.com**

To find out more about Girls Rock! RVA, check out **girlsrockrva.org**

MICHELLE CRUZ GONZALES



1992
PHOTO BY KAROLINE COLLINS

INTERVIEW BY JOHN MALKIN

PHOTOS BY
KAROLINE COLLINS
JOHN LYONS
INES PERALTA
STEVEN STOTHARD

LAYOUT BY ERIC BASKAUSKAS

"Shut up and play."

Spitboy heard this so often from boys and men in their audiences that the band's drummer Michelle "Todd" Gonzales used the angry phrase as a chapter title for her recently published memoir *The Spitboy Rule: Tales of a Xicana in a Female Punk Band*. "We were a message band," said Gonzales, who recalls making tons of photocopies of Spitboy lyrics at Krishnacopy in Berkeley. The lyric sheets were distributed at shows during the '90s so the band's feminist ideas wouldn't be lost amidst the loud, fast music. Spitboy challenged racism, sexism, and patriarchy, including within the punk scene itself. They surprised some by overtly distancing themselves from the riot grrrl movement that took shape around the same time as Spitboy.

Spitboy released their first album, *True Self Revealed*, in 1992 and shared a split LP, *Viviendo Asperamente—Roughly Living*, with Los Crudos in 1995. Spitboy toured the U.S., played shows in Japan, New Zealand, and toured Europe with Citizen Fish. Before Spitboy, Gonzales played drums in Bitch Fight. After, she drummed in Instant Girl and later briefly played guitar with Kamala And The Karnivores, who recently had a reunion concert on Jan. 1, 2017.

Gonzales is a punk rock musician, mother, writer, and a professor at Las Positas College in Livermore, Calif. where she teaches English and creative writing, including a class on dystopian literature.

If punk rock has some revolutionary and political roots, then women and Xicanas have been among those who've challenged the isms that limit this on-going revolution. Gonzales's book and blog are filled with insights about navigating life in a culture where race, gender, and class still weigh heavy on determining potential. And Gonzales manages to do this with a great sense of humor and hope.

I DIDN'T THINK I HAD TO FEEL
I DECIDED TO START THE BAND
I WANTED TO HEAR.

I SPENT A LOT OF TIME THINKING ABOUT HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS TO FEEL SEEN—

John: You write in your book *The Spitboy Rule: Tales of a Xicana in a Female Punk Band* that you were inspired by The Go-Go's and The Clash and attending the US Festival in 1983. I'd love to hear more about how you first got into punk and playing music.

Michelle: I was in the marching band in elementary school so I had an identity as a musician from a very early age. I had girlfriends with me in the school band, including my friend Nicole Lopez. As we got older, The Go-Go's broke. They really got our attention right away and we were so excited. We thought, "We could totally do that!"

But, at the same time, Nicole and I were growing up in a small town (Toulumne, Calif.) and coming into our social-political identities because we were bullied a lot. There aren't very many Mexicans there—especially back then, or Chicanas or people of color. There were two black kids in high school in Toulumne County in the '80s. There were no anti-bullying campaigns back then. I was bullied a lot by teachers and adults, in addition to peers. When you grow up feeling marginalized or "other," it helps you learn about politics and your place in the world really quickly.

The Clash caught our attention and were singing about political issues. When *Combat Rock* came out, we discovered the other—and even better in some ways—Clash records like *London Calling* and *Sandinista*. The Clash did this really weird combination. They were interested in Latino culture, Nicaragua and the Spanish Civil War, things outside of their own experience and identities. I thought that was really cool. They also do it in a slightly fetishy way in their songs sometimes, which I've criticized. But that was the first time that a rock band spoke to me.

I still had feathered hair and was wearing my Mom's chanclas sandals and terrycloth shorts. We went to see The Clash, David Bowie, and U2 and a lot of great new wave bands at the US Festival. We were really there to see The Clash. I came home and thought, "That is it! I have to be in a band and cut my hair. My life is changed!" I had a really serious coming-of-age experience during and after the US Festival. From then on, Nicole and I knew we were going to start our own band. We were barely thirteen. It took a few years to learn some rock'n'roll instruments because we were both playing the flute. She also played saxophone.

Right after The Clash, we started learning about punk bands that were on smaller labels like Dead Kennedys and MDC and "starter" punk bands like Black Flag and Circle Jerks. The closest mall was in Modesto, about an hour and a half away, and that was the only place to get records by starter punk bands.

When we got a little older, we started coming to shows in the Bay Area at The Farm and The Mabuhay with The Dead Kennedys and Reagan Youth. We went to the Democratic National Convention in 1984 where Reagan Youth played with Dead Kennedys, The Dicks, and a bunch of other bands. Nicole's mom was very politically aware and active. She saw how the punk bands were so political and she liked the bands. She thought they were entertaining and teaching young people about issues. She was willing to drive us to these shows, and the DNC, and protest sites where the Dead Kennedys played.

John: I was also attracted to the political punk of The Clash and Dead Kennedys. How revolutionary do you think punk has been? Of course there's a paradox of bands singing about capitalism and militarism who themselves are on corporate record labels. A good example is The Clash singing, "I'm So Bored with the USA" and a year later they're touring with The Who in stadiums across the United States. It seems tricky to be a radical musician without becoming commodified. It's complicated!

Michelle: It is complicated. I'm still glad they did it! I'm still glad The Clash "sold out." Spitboy's aim was not to be on a major label and be virtuoso musicians. We were a message band and that was our purpose. We were message-driven and everything else was secondary. Even though that's what Spitboy wanted, I have always been uncomfortable with being too critical of the "sell-out," of using the s-word. I see the problems with that. I don't think we would've had the opportunity to do that. No one was going to put Spitboy on a major label. We were way too political and in-your-face.

I am uncomfortable with the s-word mainly because there are some people whose whole life is music and learning, as an art form, and I respect that. On the other hand, I also respect that there are different ways to approach music and, maybe like Spitboy, we use it as a way to deliver a message.

I'm glad The Clash "sold out" because a lot of us would not have [known them]. I live in a really small town and if The Clash hadn't put out *Combat Rock* and weren't played on the radio, I maybe would've never become as political as I am. Except for my best friend Nicole's mom, I didn't grow up around people who cared about political ideas. I grew up mainly around hippie subculture.

My mom was this Chicana from East L.A. who moved to the mountains and wanted to forget that she ever lived in L.A., and to be a hippie and smoke a bunch of pot. [laughter] She didn't care about political ideas. If it hadn't been for bands like The Clash, I probably wouldn't have come into my political identity the way that I did. I'm really grateful for them selling out. But I do see the paradox and the conundrum.

John: You mentioned earlier that you wrote something about The Clash and how you felt that some of their music presented some qualities of Latin American culture in a fetishy way. Tell me about that.

Michelle: About The Clash being fetishy—I wrote this story about a character who plays drums and her name is Toni. She is Chicana. I want to get it published this year. She strikes up this friendship with Joe Strummer. It's magical realism; you question if he's really there or a figment of her imagination. The central conflict is when he asks her why she never speaks Spanish around him, she says, "Why do you speak Spanish and sing in Spanish in your songs?" She ends up telling him that it sounds weird—she likes it sort

TO HAVE A RELATED CULTURE RECOGNIZED.

SPITBOY
PHOTO BY JOHN LYONS

SPITBOY, 1995
PHOTO BY KAROLINE COLLINS

of—but he's not doing it right.

I'm not a fluent Spanish speaker. I learned okay later in life in my twenties but there are certain things about *Sandinista* and the end of the song "Washington Bullets" where they are singing gritos—"ay yay yay!"—and its horrible! I love that song but when it gets to that point, I have to turn it off. It is such a caricature of what they would do in a Spanish song, a Norteño. It feels very forced to me. That is one example. It makes sense that they would sing in Spanish in "Spanish Bombs," but it just sounds weird.

In my story, Joe Strummer says to my Toni character, "It sounds like a bunch of English folks speaking in Spanish, doesn't it?" Which is what I always think when I hear it. On the other hand, it's "Spanish Bombs" and songs like it that made me feel like they were trying to reach out to kids like me. I'm indebted in a way, but I feel nothing should go uncriticized.

I spent a lot of time thinking about what they did and how they did it and how they were super successful in reaching people. And how important it was to feel seen through their songs—even though I'm not from Nicaragua, for example—but to have a related culture recognized because there was a dearth of that back then. That was important to me, even though it was done imperfectly. What is perfect anyway?

John: Certainly, some punk bands have taken the approach of getting their music and message out by getting contracts with big record labels while others have embraced a DIY approach, where the ways in which music is recorded, distributed, and performed is in congruence with the band's ideals, message, and lyrics. I think of The Subhumans and Minor Threat as early examples of the DIY path.

Michelle: The Subhumans and Minor Threat approach was definitely the Spitboy approach. It wasn't something that we did out of peer pressure. It was something we did when we saw other bands do these things and we modeled what we did after those bands. We would go to thrift stores and buy T-shirts that were in really good condition. Of course that would be so cool now because everyone is trying to recycle everything [laughter]. We'd screen our artwork on the T-shirts and sell them for five bucks.

We wanted to do it out of our message—we are women, we are singing about women's issues and other political issues, and we want to be accessible to women. We made lyric sheets for every single show, unless for some weird reason we couldn't. We would go to Krishnacopy in Berkeley and we'd make lyric sheets. On tours, we would make a ton before we left and pass out lyric sheets to people who wanted one so that the message wasn't lost over the loud music. We played all-ages shows and tried to keep the door prices low.

Sometimes now I feel pressure to sell my stuff super cheap as if it were still 1992. Today, I can't sell patches for a dollar anymore. I have to sell them for three dollars, but it is many years later. We tried as hard as we could to not be incongruent.

There's a funny story. Instant Girl was the band the guitar and bass players and I formed after Adrian left Spitboy. We knew it was going to be just for a year and we put out one record and toured because Dominique, the bass player, was going to graduate school. We went on tour and took our friend Chris Ganchoff with us. On all of our other U.S. tours, we did almost all of the driving and didn't take men with us. That was one of our rules: no boyfriends on tour. If we got a flat tire, we changed the flat tire. Paula knew how to work on cars and she'd fix the van when it broke down. Only once or twice we had to take it to a shop, because Paula could almost always fix it. We had this feminist attitude that we were going to do everything. We're going to drive, we're going to write the songs, we're going to load the equipment, we're going to change our own tires.

Chris Ganchoff was with us on the Instant Girl tour and we were in snow. For some reason we went on tour in winter—which I didn't want to do—and we had to put chains on the car. We made Chris do it, or said he could do it, and none of us got out of the van. [laughter] This is the most incongruent thing we ever did. And we waited in the warm van while Chris got under the van and put chains on with no gloves. I never forgot that. That was the worst feminist move ever. It's a little funny, but you can't always be perfect. There was a lapse.

John: Tell me more about feminism and women in punk. In your book you write, "Like the punk scene itself, the punk record labels were run by men…" Essentially you were in a female band that played what many people thought of as male music and, simultaneously, you didn't resonate with the riot grrrl scene. You have a chapter called

THAT WAS ONE OF OUR RULES:
NO BOYFRIENDS ON TOUR.
IF WE GOT A FLAT TIRE,
WE CHANGED THE FLAT TIRE.

"Not a Riot Grrrl Band." You write about Bikini Kill concerts and some other riot grrrl concerts where men were required to stand in the back of the room.

Michelle: When you went to shows back then, you noticed that there were women and the stereotype was that the woman was always there with her boyfriend. She'd come to the show with him. That's definitely hyperbolic. There were women at shows, especially at Gilman Street. I went to shows at the Mab and a lot at The Farm, but then I started hanging around Gilman and found that more attractive and safe. There were a lot of women who hung around and volunteered and were active at Gilman and that was exciting for me.

There weren't as many women in bands. We were a novelty act. It was like, "Wow! What's it like being a woman playing music?" "I don't know. I'm a woman and I play music. What is it like? This is what's it like—people ask you what it's like." [laughter]

When Spitboy started, our aim was to play hardcore. I, in particular, wanted to hear a female hardcore band. The female bands that I heard at that time were more on the metal side or were pop punk, like Kamala And The Karnivores, which I was in. I love Kamala And The Karnivores and Green Day and melodic harmonies, but that isn't what I wanted to play. So, I kept looking for this female hardcore band and it didn't exist. So, I decided, "That's the band I want to start." I didn't think I had to feel a void. I decided to start the band I wanted to hear.

When we started the band—because we were all women—our first show was really well attended. People wanted to see if we could pull it off, if we were going to sound good, what we were going to do. Some of us were well known because some of us volunteered at Blacklist (Mailorder). I had been in other bands and Adrian did a zine. It was like women who had been in the scene doing other roles had formed a band, so people were really curious. A lot of people in the big bands from the East Bay and the Bay Area were there for our first show in a warehouse. I remember hearing from people, "Yeah that was cool."

Many of the men in the scene made it clear that we were not going to get the same kind of acceptance that bands like Econochrist were going to get. I sensed right away—and I think it's the case, with other evidence that happened further down the road. It had to do with the fact that we weren't just a "political band." We were a feminist band. And that was hard on the ears for men. It threatened their position as kings of the scene. It forced them to have to look at the scene and women's issues in a way that they hadn't before, in a way they didn't want to. It was a threat or a challenge.

As a band in the Bay Area, people speak fondly of Spitboy. People think we broke a lot of barriers, but at the time when we were playing—when Econochrist played—all the scenesters would go. When Spitboy played, I would ask, "Are you going to come see Spitboy?" I'd hear, "Oh, we saw you guys play last month." [laughter] Because of our feminism—and it was in your face—people felt like they were getting a lecture. But if Ben from Econochrist was screaming about a political issue, nobody felt like they were getting a lecture. It became a lecture if it was about women's issues. That was unfortunate and I don't think I've gotten over it completely.

I posted a piece about riot grrrl as a blog and got a lot of reads early on before I started to write the book. You can't talk about being a woman in a punk band in the '90s without talking about riot grrrl—whether to say that you were, or if you position yourself otherwise. I chose to place that right after the prologue even though it comes later chronologically. I did that because I wanted to situate Spitboy as *not* a riot grrrl band. That is one of the main things we are known for. That was an uncomfortable thing for us to do.

We skirted the question of whether we were a riot grrrl band for many, many months in interviews and finally we got asked it so much that we had a conversation in the van. We decided that we would have to say we're not a riot grrrl band. We're going to have to come out with it and be that blunt. Then maybe people will stop asking us about it.

At the DC show when we said that the boys do not have to stand in the back, that the men could stand anywhere they wanted, maybe to not block somebody, I very undiplomatically said, "We're not a riot grrrl band," and totally silenced the whole room. It was as if I had kicked the statue of Jesus in the face. The room went silent. I thought, "I really blew it." In hindsight, I could've been more diplomatic. That wasn't my forte back then. I don't regret saying it. We did wind up taking a lot of flack for that.

It was important to me to explain in the book why we didn't want to be a riot grrrl band, to make it clear that there were specific reasons. One, we didn't want to be called "girls." Women and feminists in the 1990s in the Bay Area had decided that being called a girl was the worst. It assigned a hierarchical nature; you were a full-grown woman and you're being called a girl. That was one of the main things that we were against.

John: In the early '80s I was attracted to punk but repelled by violence at shows, especially with hardcore bands. While anger has been a big part of punk, I was surprised to see some punk bands go down paths of extremism and violence. In your book you describe a couple of Spitboy shows where you were concerned about the violence and Spitboy even stopped a show. Do you have any insights about why violence became a part of punk? How does a revolutionary or freedom movement become self-harming?

Michelle: I've thought a lot about this and I think I know the answer. I know there's probably not one answer, but I think I know the answer. [laughter] That is that punk and hardcore is inherently aggressive, angry music. So aggressive, angry music can attract not just people who are angry about a political or social issue and want to sing about it, but people who are just angry about anything. And maybe even pathologically angry about certain things. That music and that sound attract people who are angry, drunk punk types; people who are already aggressive and maybe haven't learned to use their words.

I think that a lot of people come to shows 'cause on the surface punk is about fucking shit up and rebellion. Many people don't think beyond that. "We're there to be angry and rebel." There are others who have a more thoughtful approach. There are some who come into punk who are angry and totally rebellious and just want to be angry punks and then grow into a political way. But there are those who are just attracted to music as an outlet for aggression or as a form of entertainment, where they can go and act wild. That is my assessment of why punk and hardcore attracts those people.

SPITBOY WITH KOALA, 1995
PHOTO BY KAROLINE COLLINS

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Spitboy had additional concerns about aggression at shows and it largely had to do with our safety and the safety of people in the audience. If a show got really aggressive, we would shut it down. We didn't want people in the audience to get hurt. A lot of women would come out to Spitboy shows, women who don't feel like fighting and moshing aggressively. We were trying to take care of ourselves and our audience.

There was an additional thing; if we were playing a bill with other bands that were our friends, or on tour in Europe with many men on the road crew, it was uncomfortable for us as feminists with a strong message to ever be put in a position where the men would have to defend or protect us physically. We had drivers and a roadie, but there was an unspoken message. We'd have guitars strapped on us and I'd be behind a drum set. If someone got super aggressive and tried to attack us, someone would have to step in and it would probably be one of the guys because it would be one of the guys from the audience attacking. That was uncomfortable for us. We didn't want men to fight our battles for us. We were uneasy about dating men in other bands because we didn't want people to say we were riding the coattails of other bands that were more well-known or more well-liked than we were.

In terms of the violence, we were uncomfortable with men fighting our battles for us. Normally, we played all-ages shows where you couldn't drink, so that was perfect. Because that cuts down on the aggression when people aren't drunk and out of control, right? But sometimes we'd play a house party and we couldn't control that and people would bring their beer and get wasted and be slamming in the pit. Those are the shows we hated playing or were worried about playing because we knew the violence was real and we didn't want anyone in the band or in the audience to be harmed.

John: Tell me a little more about anger. Western psychology has often advocated yelling or hitting pillows to release anger. On the other hand, many spiritual traditions teach that if you're angry, you're cultivating anger. Henry Rollins told me that anger is what motivates his creativity. Do you think that anger can be dissipated by being angry, by screaming in a punk band? I'm also curious what you think about the combining of punk and spirituality in some realms.

Michelle: I agree that anger creates more anger. In terms of spirituality, I'm not a goddess type, but I think of the female deities in my own culture, like the Catholic female indigenous deities. If I were ever to fall on my knees, I would pray to La Virgin, but I do think that if there were a real spirituality, it would be mindfulness practice. In particular, mindfulness around things like anger and really trying to be mindful of using anger as a motivator and how not to allow it to consume you and take over.

There was a time in my life I almost had no use for punk. That was when I became a mother. Becoming a mother and nursing an infant requires so much calm and patience. It is such an intensely spiritual time that I didn't want to think too much about issues that made me angry or listen to angry music. I wanted to raise, or nurse—as in breastfeeding—a child who was secure, patient, and calm. And I didn't think I'd be able to do that by being angry.

It wasn't that I couldn't listen to punk rock; I didn't want to. Except for The Clash! [laughter] I almost didn't want anything to do with that kind of intense aggression because it would've tainted the sweetness of being a mom and having an infant in your arms. Just that intense bond that was so important for me to nurture. I wanted to be separate from that during my son's infant and toddler years.

My son is fourteen now, I am in perimenopause, and I'm finding that some of those intense, angsty feelings I had when I was a teenager are back almost full force. My body is changing and some of those old feelings are present about being invisible. Before, it was about being a teenager—no one thought that you knew what you were talking about. —And now more so when women get older, we are such a youth-obsessed society, and I almost feel like starting a punk band again. I'm aware that I'm quicker to anger again like when I was sixteen. I both like it and don't like it. I need to use the mindfulness practice to access the anger that is positive so that I'm not being walked all over. But not to let it consume me. For me, it takes so much energy to be angry and I'd prefer not to be.

John: I loved the video of you reading "Does Your Mom Play Drums?" It's a fun, insightful story. And congratulations on having the book published.

Michelle: Thank you. The book has been very well received so far. I'm excited to share, to make sure that Spitboy isn't lost in history, and to make sure that people who are interested in women in rock know that in the '90s not all-female punk bands were riot grrrl bands. As I was writing the book, those things became important to me to make clear. I felt I was sort of protecting the legacy. That sounds really ominous, right? [laughter]

MICHELLE WITH D.H. PELIGRO
PHOTO BY INES PERALTA

MICHELLE WITH ALICE BAG
PHOTO BY STEVEN STOTHARD

STACEY DEE :: GUITAR/VOCALS
JENNIE COTTERILL :: GUITAR/VOCALS
LINH LE :: BASS/VOCALS
MYRA GALLARZA :: DRUMS
BAD COP
BAD COP

INTERVIEW :: PAUL SILVER AND TODD TAYLOR
PHOTOS :: PAUL SILVER AND RACHEL MURRAY FRAMINGHEDDU
LAYOUT :: DYLAN DAVIS

Bad Cop/Bad Cop are a family of four strong individuals. And they're advocates for us all. They come from different places and different backgrounds, but they're united in purpose: there is no option but to rock! More than that, Bad Cop/ Bad Cop are about empowering people to be themselves, stick together, and stand up for what's right. Bad Cop/ Bad Cop are all about empowerment of marginalized people. Don't let the name fool you. It wasn't calculated and it isn't a political statement. According to them, being yourself shouldn't *have* to be a political statement.

The band came together in 2011 and were signed to Fat Wreck Chords by the end of 2013. It's been a whirlwind of activity since that includes the release of an EP, a full length LP, and multiple tours across the U.S. and Europe. After returning from one tour across parts of the U.S. and Canada, and in the aftermath of one of—if not the most contentious presidential campaigns in history—Bad Cop/Bad Cop paid Razorcake a visit to talk about what drives them, both as a band and as a family.

(L to R) STACY, MYRA, JENNIE and LINH | Paul Silver

Paul: I first met you at Awesomefest 7 in 2013, but you've been a band since 2011. How and why did you start the band?
Stacey: One of my best friends, Little Jen, and I had been playing music together for ten or eleven years. Myra was at one of my band's shows and said, "Let's jam," and a couple weeks later we were all in a room playing some music. It was just going to be a three piece, then the next day Jen brought Jennie. Shit changed. [laughs]
Myra: It did. We were just going to do it for fun.
Stacey: It's never just for fun for me.
Myra: Well, it was for us. When I first heard, "Oh, I'll invite Stacey," I was like, "Really? Stacey Dee? That would be rad!" We had our first practice together and we had fun. But we were all in different bands at the time, so we didn't think that we could actually make another project and sustain it. The second practice, Jen asked, "Do you mind if I bring someone else?" I said, "Is it a guy or a girl?" She said, "It's a girl." "Yes! Cool!" [laughter] So Jennie came to our second practice, and we all practiced for the first time ever. We did six or seven songs and we never even jammed.
Stacey: Already singing together.
Myra: I never had that experience before with any of my bands, so I thought we might be onto something.
Jennie: Jen was in the band for about a year, but she wasn't into doing more with it. She actually brought in Linh and that's the Bad Cop that you know.
Paul: You mentioned asking whether Jen was bringing a girl or a guy to practice. Was it a conscious decision to make the band all female, or did it just work out that way?
Myra: It worked out that way. It's really hard to find female musicians who are available. If they're already taken, a lot of them don't want to do other projects. I always envisioned having an all-female band. So I thought, "Okay, if we get one more chick…" [laughs] It's not that it was how it had to be; it just happened. It wouldn't have mattered if it were a guy.
Jennie: But now it matters! [laughter]
Paul: Stacey, you're from the Bay Area. Jennie, you're from Michigan. Linh, you're from Philly?
Linh: Philly, but I grew up in upstate New York.
Paul: And Myra, you're from right here in Southern California. How did all of you end up in the L.A. area?
Jennie: Michigan was not the right place for me, so when I was eighteen I moved, didn't do any research, and wound up where I knew a person, which happened to be Orange County (Calif.). I started going to community college and working, trying to pull it off. My first friends that I made were in a band, and I had always played music. They asked, "Want to be in our band?" And I said, "Fuck yeah, I do! Cool! Friends, and a band?" And I just stayed. I've been here longer than I've ever lived anywhere.
Stacey: L.A. gets its hooks in you. I never thought I'd be here ten years.
Myra: That happens to a lot of people. They only meant to come here for a short time, but they end up being here forever. Everyone I grew up with who's local is moving out.
Jennie: It's important to make a choice for yourself in your life. I think if you don't ever do that, then you wonder forever.
Linh: I grew up in Rochester, New York, a tiny city. After that, I moved to Philadelphia, went to school, and did a few bands. One band decided they wanted to do some shows out in L.A. for a few months, and I said, "Maybe I'll just move there."

My friend who lived in Costa Mesa at the time wanted to move to Philly to work in an all-female tattoo shop there. She said, "Why don't you just rent out my apartment?" And I said, "Okay, we switchee." [laughs] She didn't take my apartment. We just switched cities. I bought a one-way ticket, brought two pieces of luggage, and came over. I've had a lot of friends from the East Coast who have moved out here that have moved back, too. You really have to know what you want to do, or at least know what kind of area you want to be in for a while. Philly was it for a little while, but I moved out of that after nine years.
Stacey: I got married, moved to London from San Francisco, and was there for a year. My ex-husband is from Culver City and had dual citizenship because his parents are English and Welsh. I got to go there for a while, but then he wanted to move back, so here I am. I didn't think I'd stay, but then this band started.
Paul: Talking about the name of your band, do you have any friends in law enforcement?
Jennie: We've met some. We've got a real good friend, Greet, in Belgium. We met her at an all-female arm wrestling tournament [laughter], and later, on the internet, she said, "Listen guys, I'm a cop!" She's probably our best cop friend.
Myra: She's an awesome photographer and music lover. I have friends I went to school with who are cops, and one friend that was a cop is now a councilman in San Pedro. My brother-in-law was a cop. My other brother-in-law is a cop now; he's a sheriff in Long Beach.
Stacey: And there are cops we meet, like when we got robbed in San Antonio. That little cop asked, "What's your band's name?" [laughter] Cute little officer, we told her "Sorry, it's Bad Cop/Bad Cop," and she laughed, "Heh, heh, heh." [laughs]
Paul: Jennie, you're the artist in the band. You design all the artwork and logos. Do you ever try to disguise the name, to make it not be so in-your-face?
Jennie: No. I'm a big fan of having the illustration communicate what it is. That's why there's a badge and a donut. I know that sounds cheap, but I would never be like, "It should be a sexy chick!" [laughs] That has fucking nothing to do with it.
Myra: Are you saying, "F cops" kind of thing? There are people who do artwork that is to piss off the police. I know what you're talking about because I have seen that, and we're not about that. Some people who don't know us might think we're doing that to be anti-police and that's not really what we are.
Linh: If you listen to our music, you know it has nothing to do with that.
Jennie: I'm never into violence.
Stacey: Violence is dumb.
Todd: Donuts over violence. [laughter]
Paul: There's a great duality to your sound with sweet harmonies and melodies, but with an aggressive punk edge to the music and lyrics. How does the band balance these contrasting qualities?
Jennie: Every woman alive balances those things. That's us. It's not one dimension; we've got four dimensions here. There's not a sweet one of us or a mean one of us. We're human.
Linh: We're like the seasons, but all four seasons in each person.
Jennie: It's like a painting that's just cute. Marion Peck (surrealist painter) is better because there's something creepy happening. Creepy cute is like salty sweet. You've got to have another layer, otherwise [whispering] "I can't look at this. I can't listen to this." If it's just aggressive or it's just sweet, blech.
Todd: Do you think you would try to balance each other out, though? I'm thinking in terms of an album. "Okay, we need something that's less sweet." Or "we need a balance in…"
Jennie: As humans we balance each other out. We're in love with each other, but it's a real love. Sometimes there's fighting, arguing, and dealing with things.
Linh: It's like a sibling kind of love. There's always going to be bickering like any sibling has. It doesn't mean that we think less of each other.
Stacey: Celebrating the differences and pushing each other to be the best we can be is what we're really into.
Todd: But three-part vocal harmonies aren't very common.
Jennie: But that's what we've got. That's what's in the cupboard, so we're making soup out of it.
Stacey: It came naturally. It wasn't that we wanted to try three-part harmonies.
Jennie: It happened when Linh joined the band and can sing like a boss. We had to get a microphone on her! [laughs]
Stacey: [whispering] We're going to get a fourth microphone. [laughs]
Myra: No way that's happening!
Stacey: Myra can sing, though.
Myra: I have done gang vocals and things like that. I used to drum and sing in my other band, too. That was hard.
Paul: Speaking of those three-part harmonies, Linh, you have a classically trained voice, but what made you want to be like Tia Carrere in *Wayne's World*?
Linh: [laughs] How about everything? I wouldn't say I was classically trained. I took voice lessons that had courses to teach you how to sing opera and read sheet music. When I first saw *Wayne's World* as a kid, before

(L to R) JENNIE, LINH, MYRA, and STACY | Paul Silver

pursuing any sort of musical direction, it was rad to see somebody who looked—well, she didn't look anything like me. But, I could do that! Without the outfits but, yes, I could do that. She's so cool, she's herself, and she's the boss of her shit. And she was into frickin' Wayne. That's so cool. I looked up to her. I wanted to be her.

Stacey: For a little Asian girl to see an Asian woman, it's not common at all.

Linh: And, not to sound like all Asians are like this, but if you look, the only reference you see in Asian musicians is in an orchestra.

Todd: And Bow Wow Wow. [laughter]

Stacey: 5.6.7.8's.

Linh: 5.6.7.8's, that is something that came across later in my life.

Myra: And Margaret Cho, don't forget.

Linh: I grew up in a community that was not—Westminster (Calif.), there was a small Vietnamese community—but not nearly as dense. In my graduating class of a few hundred people, there were only around five Asian people.

Jennie: When you are not seeing anyone who looks like you, you can assume, "I could do that," but you have to think about it harder, and imagine something you've never really thought about. Seeing someone who looks like you—you guys [Myra and Stacey] both talk about Pinky Tuscadero (character from the TV series, *Happy Days*) and it's because that's a badass girl!

Stacey: And *Grease*! All of my coolness is based around *Grease 2*. Those pink ladies were the shit. And Pinky Tuscadero, Leather Tuscadero, and The Go-Go's really did it for me. I saw Jane Wiedlin when I was six. I walked up to the front of the stage, saw her, and thought, "That's what I'm going to do with the rest of my life."

Paul: Some of your lyrics are pretty dark. Some of the themes are around failed or abusive relationships, feelings of emptiness. For example, what's the backstory with "Sugarcane?"

Stacey: I lived in Inglewood (neighborhood in Los Angeles). I had a great friend who was my roommate and she found this boyfriend who I gave a chance to. I brought him to shows; I did a lot of stuff to make this guy feel welcome. I invited him into my house.

One day, I was sitting downstairs and he came down in a T-shirt and boxer shorts. I was on the phone. He was standing above me and said, "I know you wanna be my bitch, but Cindy's already my bitch." I said, "What the fuck are you talking about?" Then he walked over to the doorway and sat there staring at me.

So I went into my room and grabbed a hammer, because I didn't know this motherfucker. I called Cindy and asked, "Can you come down here? I need to talk to you. This is what happened with your boyfriend. I don't need anyone like that in my space or talking to me like that. I don't disrespect him. I don't disrespect you. That's fucking weird, and I don't appreciate it." I went upstairs and told him, still with a hammer in my hand, "I brought this up here because I don't fucking know you. Don't talk to me like that." It got really heated.

I left and I let things go. Two days later she came home with a black eye. I asked her, "What happened to your face?" She said, "We were just fooling around, just playing, and I got an elbow in the face." I thought, that happens, I've roughhoused. Then she came home the next day with another black eye, and I said, "Okay, let's talk." "No, we were just playing." People make excuses.

I was in my room two days later and I heard someone come in, slam the door, run upstairs, and my heart knew what it was, so I ran after her. She locked herself in her room, and I said, "Cindy, let me see you." She told me to leave her alone.

She came downstairs the next day and her lip was busted open like a lobster tail. I asked her, "Why do you keep going over there?" That's something I don't understand, is how women in abusive relationships keep going back. She tried to explain it to me, but she couldn't find the words to tell me so I could understand it. And I'm sure she fought, too, got her blows in, but it was a really sick thing that she kept going to do.

I was at home putting hot compresses on her chin because she got an abscess from being punched in the mouth. It got infected down by her gum line, so she has this thing coming out of her chin, and I'm there pulling pus out of it and doing whatever I could to try to heal her up, because she won't go to the emergency room. I was pissed. I couldn't get through to her, so I wrote that song. And it's a true story.

Myra | Paul Silver

Todd: I don't know a whole lot of people whose response would be to get a hammer and confront somebody, regardless of gender. It takes a lot of power to have it and the first reaction is *not* to smash somebody with it.
Stacey: I slept with that hammer next to my bed for a really long time because he would still come around and take shit out of my recycling. [laughter]
Myra: You guys handled that way differently than I probably would have at that time. I would have threatened this motherfucker: "I don't want to ever see you here, and if you put your hands on her again your ass is going to jail." But a lot of times when you do say things to people like that [motions that it's going over his head].
Jennie: Nobody who has what they need—physically, mentally, and emotionally—would do that to another person.
Myra: What's funny is he never got busted for that. She never told the cops about it.
Stacey: She did file a restraining order, but then she went over there the next day. It's something I'll never understand. You need closure from what? This guy's coming to your work and all these things, and you're telling him to never come see you, but then you're going to go to his house?
Jennie: That's control. We've all talked about emotionally controlling relationships.
Stacey: But I think it's also her part in it, being emotionally controlling as well. "He's not allowed to see me but I'm going to go over there and we're going to have sex and a fight, and then we're never going to see each other again." That's her power in it.
Linh: That's her logic, thinking that she has the power when she really doesn't.
Myra: You can't stop people; you can't change people. It's got to come from within themselves.
Stacey: But it sucked, and I'm glad that I got to write it. We've had a lot of people come and want to talk to me about that kind of thing, because they've had sisters who didn't make it.
Myra: We met a lot of girls on this tour, women who expressed themselves because of that song. They came out and told us "Thank you." That song gave them strength.
Paul: Myra, you learned to play drums at your church when you were young and the pastor was your teacher. How did people react to your desire to play drums?
Myra: People were stoked. I learned to play there because of my grandfather. I was the only female, at that time, doing that. We had other girls in the church, but they wanted to play piano, organ.
Stacey: Flute.
Todd: Choir.
Myra: And that's the thing, growing up in the seventies, girls were not meant to be doing boy things, or playing boy instruments. I tried to play piano, and I've done the flute, accordion. I could never remember the notes. I never liked it. But drums, for sure, I would go to it and play them.

My grandfather was a blues guitar player and was in a band. I would always play with him. I used to play fast, so I would always be told to slow down. I had to learn playing with a band. I didn't read notes so it was all feel and listening and looking. That's how I learned to play drums. I started playing jazz, learning that. But I was more of a rock drummer. They would tell me that, back in the day. "You hit hard, girl." Aren't they meant to be hit hard?

So, anyway, it was between me and maybe four or five boys who wanted to play drums, but there was only one kit. And there's one of me. [laughs] I would always get selected to play the most because I played better than them. I did that for a while until I started rebelling when I was about eleven. I didn't want to go to church anymore. I was done with that shit. [laughter] I didn't go there to praise the lord, as my parents and everybody wanted.
Linh: [whispering] She went to praise the drums!
Jennie: And the devil. [laughs]
Myra: Back in those days, people were stoked to come to our church and it was a weird thing. When you're a kid you have no fear. I used to play in front of all these people and I didn't give a shit. I would just go and play the drums. Here I am in my cute little dress and I would go and play the drums.
Jennie: Are there photos of Myra looking like Strawberry Shortcake? [laughs]
Myra: When we went to church, girls were not allowed to wear pants. We had to wear dresses. You had to represent being a girl. I would have to grind my dress and do this [motions pressing cloth under her legs] because it's, "Hello! I've got my legs open here [playing drums]."
Paul: Talking about being told to dress a certain way. Linh, you used to play upright bass in a psychobilly band (The Reach Around Rodeo Clowns).
Linh: I sure did.
Paul: Were you told to dress and act in a particular way for that band?
Linh: Not really act, but I was definitely told to dress a certain way. That sucked.
Paul: What way was that?
Linh: It was generally pin-up, provocative style, and I didn't want to do it. Corset, short skirt or pencil skirt, fishnets, and heels. I liked to jump on my upright and play while standing on it, so taking thirty seconds out of the song to take off my shoes was annoying. But thankfully my drummer, Dave Ferrara, said I didn't look happy. I wasn't. He was the only original member of this band and he told them, "Just let her wear what she wants to wear. She needs to perform at her full potential and if you're making her do something she doesn't want to do, she's not going to." So, sure enough, I got those Chucks and shorts on! And it was fun again.
Jennie: It's crazy to me. We're not old ladies, but in every one of our lives—and this is not exclusive to us—but every woman has been told, "If you want to do anything, you're going to have to play by these fucking weird made-up rules."
Linh: The other thing that really sucked—and it's not so much anymore—but the psychobilly scene is pretty distinct looking. If you didn't have the Bettie Page (1950s pinup model) cut bangs—I stopped doing that shit all the time. Loading in my equipment I would get, "Why is that girl carrying her boyfriend's stuff?"
Myra: We've all gotten that.
Stacey: I've had less of that stuff in my life, compared to other women. Maybe I don't hear it. I've always played hard with dudes. I've never felt like I've been treated differently.
Linh: If you're into that scene and you like doing it, then by all means, more power to you. I'm not poo-pooing the psychobilly scene. If you're making an effort to dress this way, if that makes you happy, by all means, cool. I like playing rockabilly and psychobilly music. But I don't feel dressing up like that makes me an upright bass player. I am a fucking upright bass player.
Paul: Going to another one of your songs, let's talk about the significance of the song, "Like Seriously." Some of the lyrics are "Hardcore as fuck but I'm still sweet / Like candy and coke, but not like some novelties." Tell us about a time when someone treated

STACY I Paul Silver

you as a novelty and how did you call out the douchebags treating you like that?

Jennie: It's like being a white zebra, all ladies. Yes, it does garner a certain amount of additional attention that we are capitalizing on. And we have wondered what this life would be like if we were all male identified, but it's so irrelevant. I can't separate any of my life from that. I am this person and these experiences have led us all here to this point.

Linh: Us happening to be four females in a band, that's not a "gimmick." [laughs] We just happened to come together and write songs together, and it's doing really well.

Jennie: Some people do try to make it into a novelty. It's usually people who don't know about modern conversations going on. They'll say, "I love a girl band! That's so hot!" I don't care what you think is hot!

Linh: Or, "I'm not normally into girl bands, but you guys are great." What the fuck is that supposed to mean?

Jennie: You think this is new and this is novel? But women have been creative and powerful since the dawn of time.

Myra: But it's unfortunate. This last tour, there were areas where women bands are not a known thing. I was kind of shocked to hear that. Even in Europe, there were places we played where we were the first female band to play that venue.

Jennie: This tour was different because we had the gravity of Aimee (Allen, of The Interrupters). More than half the bill, already, is female.

Linh: Maybe this will encourage people, especially in these rural areas, that being a female musician or being in an all-female band is achievable.

Todd: You are these people's Tia Carerre. You are operational examples of what can happen. And beforehand, they can say, conceptually, "Yeah, women can play music, but I never saw it in front of me," and have this visceral response to it.

Stacey: In that line, Paul, where it's saying, "Not some novelties" I was trying to say it in two different ways, because I'm a big fan of battle rap. If you say something a couple different ways, it makes you smart. [laughter] Saying "not some novelties"—candy and Coke and all these things would be one—but not a "novel tease" is up there, like sex kittens. That's what that line means.

Myra: Most of the girl bands that I've known and played with in the past use the shtick of being sexy. Those were the ones that got more attention. It didn't even matter how good they were.

Linh: And it sucks and it's sad, but people blame us, silently, for not being that way.

Jennie: It's odd that just being yourself is a political statement.

Paul: More lyrics from that song, "No, we're not selling sex, but we'll make your eardrums wet." As strong women in a punk band, do you often run into men misinterpreting that as you coming on to them?

Jennie: If people aren't listening, and if you're still living in this weird cis-male-goggled world—which exists for a lot of people—then you would think that the world is a grocery store and you can just pick whatever you want. Every woman is straight and available. And it's no and no. This has

JENNIE I Rachel Murray Framingheddu

nothing to do with you. Wake up! Yes, of course people still think that.

Myra: I've had people tell us that they thought we were dykes or gay.

Linh: I don't care if they think I'm gay or not. If it means you'll not be a creep towards me, by all means, I'm gay as shit. [laughs]

Paul: Here's another lyric: "Maybe we can drop the Y / Change it to *Boss*." Often in society, strong, assertive women are labeled as being bossy, where men doing the same thing would be labeled as leaders. What advice would you give to others who are traditionally told to be submissive and "know their place"?

Jennie: Don't ever listen to that.

Stacey: We're so fortunate to not have that in our lives.

Jennie: It has been in our lives, Stacey.

Stacey: Did your parents raise you like that?

Jennie: We had discussions about being lady-like, which later got dropped.

Stacey: I never had any of that stuff.

Jennie: I did. My parents are well-meaning, educated people who did not expect to have a gay son and an overly assertive, maybe too creative and unfocused daughter. That's not what they thought when they moved into their suburban home. But it's a conversation, and they're not disappointed in us in any way.

We've all learned from each other. They now vote knowing what they have learned from their children. They meant the best for us. It was, "Steve, maybe you should join the baseball team. Jen, maybe you shouldn't." Sorry, we're going to disappoint you if that's how you want to feel about it, but it became a dialog instead of, "No, you listen and do what we're saying." And that's why they're great parents.

Stacey: Dialogue is great. To learn from each other is amazing.

Jennie: That's all you can do in life; is look and listen. And share and listen, and change your mind. But don't let anybody tell you how to be.

Linh: That's one thing we definitely learned in my family. I can't express how very thankful I am to have been raised by my mom and my sisters, because they're all incredibly strong women. There's a reason my dad looks like Homer Simpson. [laughs] He just kind of goes, "Okay, you go do it." We're going to do it anyway.

My parents didn't anticipate me doing this. They've been together over forty years. Their marriage was arranged, though. It's cultural. And they're happy. I'm not poo-pooing that concept. But it's almost brought into our family—from our cousins who had that same arrangement—marrying another Vietnamese guy or wife.

My sisters and I, though, we're going to do what we want. We've had verbal altercations with family members and have been ostracized from certain family members because of their thoughts on our independence. If it has to be, it has to be. I don't hate my family that no longer talks to me. It was their choice to not try to reach out to me anymore because I decided to take the route that I have—or that my sisters decided to marry who they wanted—or pursue a career they wanted.

STACY I Rachel Murray Framingheddu

EVERY WOMAN HAS BEEN TOLD, "IF YOU WANT TO DO ANYTHING, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO PLAY BY THESE FUCKING WEIRD MADE-UP RULES."

Jennie: Cutting destructive, critical ties is key to flourishing and being who you are, and I can't recommend that enough.
Linh: Anybody who cares about you will not tell you to stop doing something. As long as it's not destructive to yourself, like substance abuse. If it's something that's a passion of yours that you really want to pursue—don't ever have the audacity to tell someone you care about to not do that because you're afraid of what might happen to them. If they really want to do it, be supportive.
Paul: Sadly, we keep hearing about women being sexually harassed and assaulted in the punk scene, either by men from bands, soundmen, booking agents, or club managers. What advice would you give to people in the scene facing this sort of harassment?
Stacey: Stand up for yourself.
Jennie: And speak up for your friends. It's your responsibility, as a decent human being, to not be comfortable with this and to say something. Otherwise, you are not an ally. It's the silence that makes things worse.
Myra: I don't know if that should so much be advice. It should be the common sense thing for a person to do.
Linh: Unfortunately, it has to be advice, because it's not common sense.
Stacey: We were in Florida. This was a bummer, because I didn't know what to do. It was a dude who came in and gave me this big hug, and his hand fell and went against my ass. I looked at Myra, and she said, "I think it was a mistake," and I just turned around and walked away. I did look at him like, "You want some?"
Todd: Pissed off, yeah.
Stacey: I did it kind of jokingly, but I should have told him, "Motherfucker, get the fuck off me!"
Jennie: We have a policy in the band: look out for your friends.
Linh: I had something in Boston. It wasn't just Jennie and me witnessing it. Another girl we didn't know asked, "Did you just see that?" A guy was taking pictures of the bartender, zooming in.
Jennie: So we told the people who worked there to get this pervert out of there. Okay, email us and tell us if this is true. There's got to be a pervert app where you can take surreptitious photos of women's bodies and then it doesn't go into your camera roll. I think it goes somewhere else, because they said they checked his camera roll, and I said, "We saw his phone!" That's what he was doing all night. And he was there with friends, and I thought, who the fuck is going to be friends with this pervert?

You need to say something and share the importance of saying something with the people you associate with. Because if I felt that I was alone, I might not do anything, but I travel with six people who agree with me that it's not okay to act like a creep. So I am empowered by my sisters and our touring party to speak up and say something. We were at Warped Tour in New Mexico and some guy was being a creep to his girlfriend and we said, "Excuse me sir, do you need to take a break? Because your girlfriend does not seem to want to be around you right now."
Myra: If we see it from the stage, we'll call it out. Stacey called out a girl because she was hitting this boy and pushing him. It's wrong whether it's a guy or a girl.
Jennie: And don't let somebody get steamrolled in the pit. It was on another tour, but some crazy lady was kicking people in the face, in Portland I think. Be decent to each other! It's a punk rock show, but I'm horrified when I read *Get in the Van.* Oh my god, Henry Rollins. People treated you like that? That's creepy.
Myra: We've even had friends who have gone to shows that have had stuff happen to

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LINH and MYRA | Paul Silver

them. A friend of ours likes to crowd surf and go into the pit. She's a girl, but it shouldn't matter. Men grope her and touch her and it's really fucked up.

Jennie: But if you let people know that you're there and you're not okay with it, then they have someone to deal with. And chances are you're not the only decent person in a room of three hundred human beings.

Myra: I used to go to punk shows back in the day, and it used to happen to us all the time. Girls weren't allowed in the pit, but my girls and I would go and get in the pit. "We're just as tough as you motherfuckers, so fuck off." But a lot of times, it would happen. Guys would come up and grab you, grab your ass. "What the fuck? This isn't a free-for-all!" If you were a chick in the punk scene back then, that was the shit we had to deal with.

Linh: Telling people they shouldn't have gone into the pit because that's the type of crowd it is fucking victim blaming. Fuck that shit.

Paul: With all the problems that we still have, one of the big differences is that in the past no one would say anything, and now people are speaking up.

Myra: It needs to be handled that way. Back in the day, I would say, "Fuck you dude! Don't touch me!" Nowadays, the clubs, promoters, everyone involved should be aware of what's going on. There should be no excuse.

Jennie: Everyone has a camera on them. You have to be held accountable now.

Paul: So, how—as members of a punk rock scene that we all value—do we advance the scene in a way that's healthy for everyone?

Jennie: Just continue being vocal about looking out for each other and being supportive of each other and being decent human beings. I am convinced—despite this presidential election—that things are going well. People are sharing useful information and feeling connected to and supported by each other. Otherwise, I wouldn't be doing it.

Linh: I wouldn't be opposed to just announcing it at every show, "We love you guys. We appreciate all the excitement. One thing we will not tolerate is being indecent, being an asshole."

Myra: "We will not stand for any homophobia, racism, or violence."

Linh: Even though it shouldn't have to be announced at each show, it is a necessity, still. There are still people out there who think that bullshit is okay.

Todd: Yeah, because you don't want your band to be a backdrop for any sort of violence.

Stacey: I think that some people would probably not even listen.

Jennie: But knowing that you're not in the company of people who agree with you and your shitty actions is sometimes what it takes for people to change. The negative, converse side of this is the election of this sentient yam [laughs] and people who shout racist things at people in public now because they think it's okay. Every day that I'm alive and breathing, you're going to know it's not okay.

Todd: I think hearing shame from your peer group is very strong. People are looking up to you and hearing that, associating those two things very explicitly. That drives the message.

Linh: And I think if some of the crowd are not responsive to that announcement that a band would make on stage, at least the decent people would feel supported so that they are more motivated to the point where they call out that bullshit.

Jennie: Everybody needs to be calling people out on bullshit right now. If you don't say something when someone is doing something terrible then they feel that you are agreeing with them. So say something.

Linh: I had one incident when I played in a band in Philly. We played the Fourth of July at FDR Skatepark. There were kids drinking 40s and it was a party. This one motherfucker climbed onto my bass rig and was making lewd gestures. I didn't notice it because I was in front of it, but I looked back and thought, what the fuck? I stopped playing, grabbed him by his shirt, threw him down, and I put my foot on him. And I played that way the rest of the song. Granted, he liked the fact that I put my foot on him when I played the song, but he wasn't fucking moving. I might have continued kicking him.

Jennie: I love Linh for a million reasons, but she is always very fearless about standing up for the right thing. My introduction to her was a story about how she had caught a guy who put drugs in a girl's drink and was trying to take her home from a bar.

Linh: It was gnarly. This girl was by herself. She was being surrounded by four dudes and another girl, and it didn't look right. And it was on a Sunday afternoon. I was drinking at the bar right next to where this was happening, and was watching this. I got up, grabbed a water from the bar, and I went over. The group of people were in an argument. Three of the four guys and the girl were arguing with one dude.

I asked them to move aside and I gave the girl the water. She was completely incoherent. She couldn't keep her balance, sitting. She didn't have her purse or any identification on her. She couldn't tell me her name. I gave her the water and the "perp" was then arguing with my friends and me. The other people said they saw this guy slip something into this girl's drink and he tried to take her home. I was sitting with the girl trying to get some information from her, but it wasn't working.

This guy got in my roommate's face and started to get really aggressive. I told him he had to get the fuck out of there. He kept saying, "This is my girlfriend." So I asked him, "What's your girlfriend's name, then?" His response was, "That doesn't matter." I told him, "You have about five seconds to leave, otherwise you're going to be facing some really gnarly shit. Because there are six of us against you." He pushed me, and I was ready to fight this guy because he was going to start something with me. I never lead with the first hand, but I'll sure as hell fucking end it, or at least try. I didn't anticipate what was going to happen, but he lunged at me. I punched him and I knocked him out.

Todd: Whoa!

Linh: I didn't anticipate knocking him out. I was ready to go home with bloody knuckles and get arrested. He was lying on the ground unconscious, and my roommate shouted, "How does it feel to have glass jaw, motherfucker?" [laughs] The cops were coming and I didn't want to get arrested, so I went to the other bar the girl was at to see if her purse was there. No sign of it. There was an ambulance that they put the guy I knocked out into, not the girl that was inebriated.

I was walking past the guys from the other group of people and they shouted,

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"That's the girl that knocked him out!" I thought, "Fuuuuuuuck." [laughter] A police officer said, "I hear you knocked out that guy right there." I said, "That may or may not have happened." And he said, "No, you did good, because they found this in his pocket." It was a pouch of six or seven little white pills." I said, "All right, can I go?" [laughs]

I went to the bar I was originally at. I didn't realize that everyone there saw what happened until I went to get a cider and the bartender was at the jukebox. He came back, poured the cider, and said, "This one's for you, darling!" And he poured a shot of Maker's Mark and on the jukebox was "Eye of the Tiger." [laughter] I try not to resort to physical violence, but if it has to come down to that…

Jennie: But you speak up for people. I love that.

Linh: Not speaking up is worse than what the issue is. You're silently accepting this terrible behavior.

Paul: Stacey, you rescue animals, including a blind kitten that you wrote about. Tell us about your animals.

Stacey: I realized the other day when I was talking with Jennie that maybe I had a situation when I was a kid. I've always loved animals a lot. I had a pet rabbit, and I had some cousins who were mean to my rabbit. I tried to tell my mom about it. She told me not to rat on them and to go to my room. I didn't know what to do. I went into my closet, and that's when I started hurting myself as a child. This is going to get a little dark. I'm okay to talk about this stuff because I've overcome a lot of it.

I started taking things out on myself, because I couldn't protect this little rabbit, and ultimately it died. That's been a major trauma in my life. Even as an older child, I would go down to the beach and run at seagulls. Whatever one couldn't fly away, I would take to the harbor master. I was that kind of kid.

Then, growing up, I just started rescuing animals, especially in Inglewood, because people would drop them off at the park all the time. I would be there with my dog, and I couldn't stand it. I would think, "Fuck! Another one?" But Stray Charles (a blind kitten)—I was driving home from band practice one night at two in the morning. I thought there was a paper bag in the middle of the road, but it was a kitten. I stopped and opened up all my doors—so nobody could drive past me—and went to try to get this one, but it sauntered off too quickly. Then I saw this little black and white one with its head down, so I grabbed him, jumped into the car, and drove home.

He needed a bath and I thought he was still so young that his eyes hadn't opened yet. I washed him off and I went to open his eyes, and there was just pink socket. I got all my animals out of my bedroom, put Stray Charles in there, and wrapped him in a heating blanket. I used whatever name I have on the internet and asked, "Guys, what am I going to do?" Ranae (Hummel), Ryan Young's wonderful girlfriend and one of my favorite people on the planet, called me the next day and said, "Stacey, I want to help you with that cat." I said, "Great, I need all the help I can get." She said, "No, I'm coming by there and I'm going to help you with that cat." And I said, "Oh, so it's your cat now?" [laughs] We didn't know how sick he was. Turns out he was more like eight or nine weeks old. I thought he was a three-week old kitten, he was that small. Ranae went to the vet and found that the best thing would be to sew his eyes closed. Now it's become Ryan's favorite thing on the face of the planet.

Jennie: As long as I've known you, there's been an underground railroad of animal rescues with Stacey.

Stacey: I had just gotten done telling one of my friends that after getting sober—so many things in my life have changed—and one of my things has been desensitizing to some things that used to be emotional to me. I told a friend, "I think I'm done rescuing animals." I got off the phone and went outside, and it's raining in L.A. at three in the morning, which doesn't happen, and there's this kitten meowing, and I think, "Fuck off! [laughter] I'm not going to go look for this thing! I'm not going to go in my neighbor's yard at three in the morning, rooting around in the rain." All of a sudden, I look up, and there's the kitten, just right in front of my face. So I climbed up and grabbed her. She was hungry so she came inside and ate, then got pregnant. [laughs] I found her a home. My brother has one of the kittens, I have one of the kittens, and Jessica has one of the kittens.

Paul: My first cat was a rescue. My cousin woke up in the middle of the night and heard meowing. There was a litter of four kittens under the house and no sign of the mother. He thought, maybe the mother went to find some food or something, so he put out a plate of food. The next morning the kittens were still there, the food was still there, but still no mother. He gathered up the kittens, but the shelter wouldn't take them because they were too young. So they got instructions on how to bottle feed them, and when they were nine weeks old one of them came home with me. She lived to be twenty-one years old.

Stacey: You want another cat, free? I've got three on deck right now. [laughs] After Stray Charles, blind kitties are all the rage. My friend Lizzie told me, "Hey, if you find another one of those cats…" [laughter]

SEX STAINS - PHOTOS BY CEETHREEDOM

ALLISON WOLFE

INTERVIEW BY TODD TAYLOR, EVER VELASQUEZ, AND GRIFFIN WYNNE
INTRODUCTION BY TODD TAYLOR
LAYOUT BY LAUREN MEASURE TRANSCRIPTION BY GRIFFIN WYNNE

In alternate universes, this introduction could start with: "Allison Wolfe, Olympic champion gymnast." Or "Allison Wolfe, first chair clarinet of the National Symphony Orchestra." Or, Allison Wolfe, "Daughter of the woman who started the first women's health clinic in Olympia, Wash. that got fire bombed." Instead, it is my pleasure to introduce Allison Wolfe, one of the originators and torch bearers of riot grrrl in the '90s. Riot grrrl's message was revolutionary, simple, and direct: fuck misogyny. All people are created equal, yet women were constantly treated as "lesser," paid less, on fewer stages and in fewer bands, shoved to the back. Riot grrrl addressed women's rights head-on in punk. They were confrontational. Women's rights is a lesson that still needs to be taught—and fought for every day—until we have gender parity in all strata of culture, DIY punk included.

Allison helped make influential zines, formed Bratmobile with like-minded friends, and is the founder of Ladyfest. These are huge accomplishments, but it would be a big disservice to keep Allison pegged in isolation there as an artifact worthy of academic archiving. Her fire and drive arcs more than a decade beyond Bratmobile and *Girl Germs*. Through continuous involvement in bands—and a constant contact with cultural activism—Allison is a model of flexible stamina within DIY punk.

She currently lives in L.A., sings in the fucking great, punk-driven, funky, dancey, high-energy Sex Stains, and is earning a degree in journalism.

Todd: The brief synopsis is that you've been in a ton of bands. For a long time.
Allison: I'm a lifer.
Todd: The first band that actually put out vinyl was Bratmobile…
Allison: Well, it was Bratmobile first—Dig Yr Grave was a project around that same time—and then Cold Cold Hearts, Deep Lust, and then Bratmobile got back together again. Then we broke up again, and then I was hanging around with Vice Cooler's Hawnay Troof for a while. Then we did a little side project called Baby Truth. But we got in a fight. He didn't want to name it Baby Truth 'cause he thought it sounded too much like the candy bar.
Todd: Oh, Baby Ruth.
Allison: I was like, "Whatever. No one eats that candy bar." [laughs] Then was Partyline. Then I moved to L.A. Then Cool Moms and then Sex Stains.
Todd: I could not find anything about Cool Moms whatsoever.
Allison: I know! We recorded with Cundo here, four track-ish. I'd like to put it on tape sometime.
Todd: This is going to be a pretty extensive interview so I want to set some terms. These are things which you self identify. What's your definition of DIY punk?
Allison: Oh, god.
Todd: I can read what you've said before to you.
Allison: Okay, what does it say?
Todd: On bitchmedia.com you said, "That's really what punk is. It's super DIY and way more accessible for anyone who has been marginalized. There's more opportunity there." And at lasthours.org you said, "I believe that struggle for people who are marginalized or oppressed is constant. We are building on top of past progress."
Allison: Well, DIY is just the idea of creating this alternative economy or community or scene, so you don't have to go to the mainstream powers that be to get your culture or to do your work or activity. I see that as the foundation of punk, and later, riot grrrl. A lot of the work that I'm sure that we all do—it's seeking alternative means of production for putting out your work. Things that seem more accessible. You don't have to be a "professional." Kind of learn as you go.
Todd: Also you're always among your peers. You don't have to have such an institutionalized way of looking at something.
Allison: Well, you're taking over the means of production—to have a voice for yourself and your community—and control that message because of all the biased ways that the media does portray marginalized groups. You have to speak for yourself.
Todd: That's where grassroots come in. People have different areas where they specialize or where they have influence, even if it's smaller, and they can share with one another. Feminism would be another large thing I came across when researching you, too.
Ever: [to Allison] I love that you smile when you hear the word feminism.
Todd: I understand it's basic, but I want to set up the coordinates first.
Allison: So I have to define it? [laughs] Hillary Clinton! [laughs] No, I'm kidding.
Todd: You've said some great stuff. On churchofgirl.com—you've said this many times—"If sexism exists, so then must feminism." And then on Girlbeat.com you said, "The thing that people don't think about is that even though women are seen as somewhat equal and are populating in equal numbers, we still aren't paid as much as men for any job. It can't really be argued... That is why we are not equal; the images are not equal either."
Allison: Feminism is a belief and a self-belief that you're valued, or of value, that you have value as a woman. Asserting that, or trying to assert that, or trying to get that or maintain it. My main thing is if sexism exists, then, institutionally, so must feminism, because you are constantly under attack. But I don't see feminism as something that's separate from other "isms"—or sexism from other "isms." I think that everything is interconnected and you have to be fighting the power in a lot of different ways. I don't see feminism as the most important thing going on, or sexism as the biggest evil going on, but I think it's in everything, really.
Todd: The other thing you mentioned was the idea of "cultural activism." And you said that was a term that was coined by Corin Tucker of Sleater-Kinney.
Allison: That's where I first heard it.
Todd: No one's refuted that.
Allison: She can take it! [laughs]
Todd: So how is "cultural activism" different from, say, "social activism"?
Allison: I feel that people who are "activist activists" are "on" all the time—and work for non-profit organizations, or volunteer—are just probably constantly struggling and are probably more effective against the powers that be. It's mostly because I don't feel like I deserve the term "activist." I don't feel like I'm doing enough; I never really do. I think that there are ways that we can all speak out and say something—even if it's just in a song, or in the way you live your life, or the little

HAWNY TROOF, 2003 - PHOTO BY ANTONIA TRICARICO

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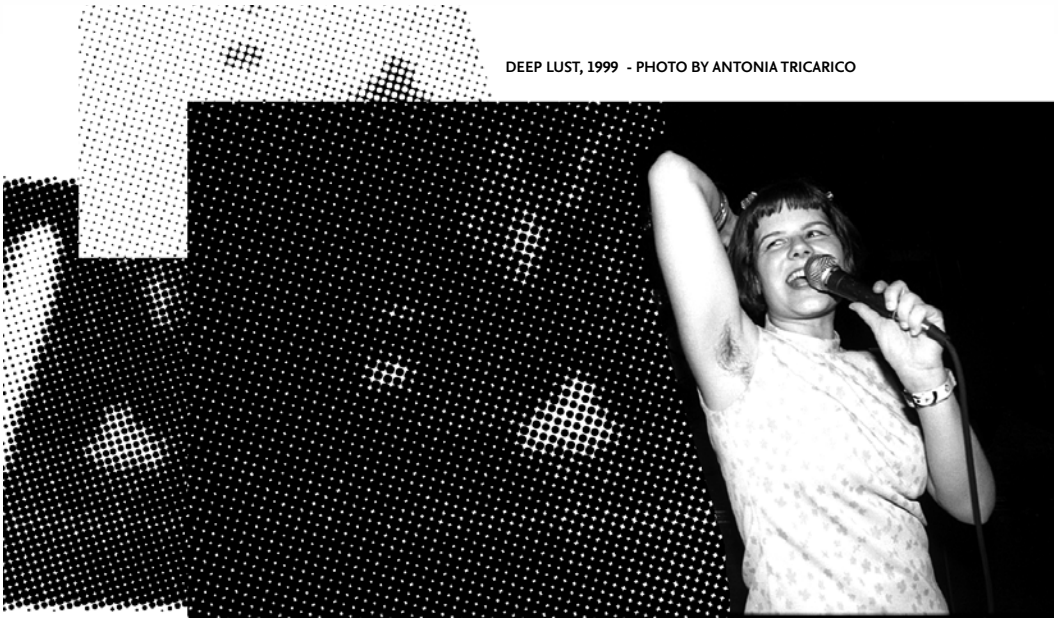


DEEP LUST, 1999 - PHOTO BY ANTONIA TRICARICO

micro aggressions going on all the time—that you speak back to. I think that's important. So if people are artists, they could use their art to speak about the world around them, or their own experiences, and what they think is right and what they think is wrong.

Todd: Speaking as somebody who spends a lot of time making a physical object myself, it takes a lot of time to do officey stuff to get Razorcake done and out the door, and not rip people off and treat everybody well. At the end of the day, I'm drained. "Yes, there are these huge injustices in the world, but I just need to get my shit done today." Balancing those things out.. It's a marathon; it's not sprint.

Ever: It's not a phase.

Todd: If you try to do everything at once, you're going to burn yourself out, and that's to no one's advantage.

Ever: I've had people introduce me to other people who don't know me, and one of the descriptions is "activist." I don't feel that I do enough to have that title, because there are a lot of people who do a lot more.

Griffin: But I think it's also a means of reimagining what "activism" looks like. It's using the platforms that we have available to us. I think it's unhelpful to only consider "activism" as going to a march every single day or doing these huge things, 'cause there are people who physically can't do that and there are people who can't pay the bus fee to go somewhere. How you live your life is important.

Todd: I think as long as you're self-conscious about it… Allison, you ready to go back to your childhood?

Allison: I'm probably still there.

Ever: That's not a bad thing.

Todd: The first song off the Sex Stains record…

Allison: "Countdown to..."

Todd: At five, you pointed a loaded gun at your twin sister, Cindy?

Allison: Well she might have pointed the gun at me. I don't know.

Todd: Whose gun was it?

Allison: My dad grew up on a farm in a small—well not even a town—in east Tennessee. He's very Tennessee. My parents met in Memphis when they were both in school. My mom's from Nebraska. They got married and then my dad enlisted in the war in Vietnam to be a medic. He was a doctor. When he came back, I think he was pretty emotionally and mentally messed up. Just kinda violent. Then my sister and I were born.

When he was away, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, so my mom was there but my dad wasn't. She was in the dorms at nursing school. She said it was just crazy how many rules and restrictions there were, but she said that when that happened they were all locked in the building for days and weren't allowed to come out. The TVs were taken away, no radio. They didn't know what was going on. So she managed to steal a key, I think, to get in an office where they could listen to the radio to find out what happened. Also, they got on the roof and watched the city burn. So that was pretty intense. After that, my dad came back and we were born. Later, she just was like, "I don't want to raise my kids here."

Plus, she grew up in a working class, Catholic, Croatian family in Ralston, Neb.—which was a small township that's now enclosed by Omaha—and my dad's family was super Baptist. I think they had a big thing against her being Catholic, and being poor. She wanted to get the hell out of their gaze as well and she gave my dad an ultimatum. They got in a car and they drove as far as you can go—just before the border

I'M INTERESTED IN HOW OUR FRIENDSHIPS LEAD TO OUR POLITICAL ACTIVISM. HOW THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL.

of Canada—and settled there, in the north of Washington state. My twin sister and I were four, and then my little sister came along.

My dad was abusive to my mom. She ended up taking us kids and leaving. We started a new life together. They got divorced. A lot of things changed because at that point my mom came out as a lesbian and a feminist, vegetarian, hippie, playing guitar. So our lives really changed. The income dropped a lot once my dad left because he was a doctor and my mom was a nurse. Ultimately, I think it was for the better, but it took awhile for us kids to adjust.

So, my dad is a total gun-totin' Republican. He still keeps a loaded gun on the bedside table. My sister and I were playing in my parents' bedroom, pulled the gun out, and were playing with it. My mom came in there and was like, "Umm put the gun down."

Todd: And your mother started the first women's clinic in Olympia. There was a lot of tension in Olympia about the presence of the clinic. The weirdest thing I read about was the employees' pets were poisoned.

Allison: I mean, we can't prove it, but...

Todd: Well that's part of the point.

Allison: Yeah, my mom started the first women's health clinic in Olympia. She had to go back to school to get a higher nursing degree. She ended up getting together with her teacher there, who left her husband, who was a doctor, to be with my mom. Apparently, that woman's husband threatened her with having us kids taken away from my mom if she were not to agree to a completely uncontested divorce and give him everything. She gave up everything just to be with us and my mom. This was the '70s, and so lord knows, of course being gay was a "crime." I'm sure the courts would have taken us away, or that was a real threat. My mom has other lesbian friends whose kids were taken away, later.

My mom was a nurse practitioner. It was quite a struggle for years. She performed rape kits, which were not routinely done at hospitals at the time. Sometimes she would testify in court—if a case ever made it that far—and she got death threats from the men who she testified against. All she did was say, "Yes, I examined this woman." The women who were making the charges were getting harassed, but my mom got harassed too. She also got harassed a lot for performing abortions. One of the things was all the pets had been poisoned one weekend. When everyone came to work on Monday—everyone had been to the emergency vet. It was a little bit too much of a coincidence.

Todd: That's why I asked the beginning gun question, I didn't know if your mom started carrying a weapon also. We also think of Oregon as being pretty progressive as a whole.

Allison: Washington!

Todd: Washington, sorry.

Allison: It's okay. We're all the same. They're both the same weird package.

Todd: Let's go to something more fun. Can you explain what MusicKids was?

Allison: [laughter] Oh my god. We moved to Olympia and started fifth grade. We got involved in this afterschool program that my teacher started, called the MusicKids. We had these T-shirts made that said "MusicKids." They were all different bright, primary colors. We would learn Jimmy Buffet and Neil Diamond songs. We'd sing and do jazz hands. What's the South Park episode? "Getting Gay with Kids"? It was *just* like that. So we did that. It was something that got me starting to think about music. Later, I played clarinet in middle school and then bass clarinet for a little in high school.

Todd: Three-time state champion?

Allison: Yes! For clarinet quartet.

Todd: Pretty humble about that. Did you ever get permanently marked by the reed on your tongue?

Allison: Oh, yeah. I totally have holes on my tongue. Not full holes. But. [Sticks tongue out and makes noises.] [laughs]

Todd: You just poked it?

Allison: All of those—if you see any spots—was from the reed. I was first chair in clarinet but then these nerdy guys who were behind me—I knew they were better than me and they finally challenged me.

Todd: To a clarinet-off?

Allison: Yeah, for first chair. So I switched to bass clarinet so I could be first chair. That was the last year of middle school. When I went to high school, there was *another* girl who was fucking bass clarinet, so then I had to be second chair because she had seniority.

Todd: She foiled your plan.

Allison: Ugh, she'd tell me what to do all the time.

Todd: So not fun. You had scabies?

Allison: [laughs]

Todd: What I learned yesterday, scabies is commonly known as "the seven-year itch."

Allison: Oh, I didn't know that. Why, because it lasts for seven years?

Todd: The myth version of names. That's what people called it.

Allison: When we moved to Olympia, we were the weird, poor kids, and—just like the song—we walked to school in the rain. No one would ever stop to pick us up and my mom would *never* drive us anywhere. She was like, "I'm going to work. You get to school somehow." Even now when I go by schools and I see parents blocking the way, I'm just like, "Come on! Make the kid walk."

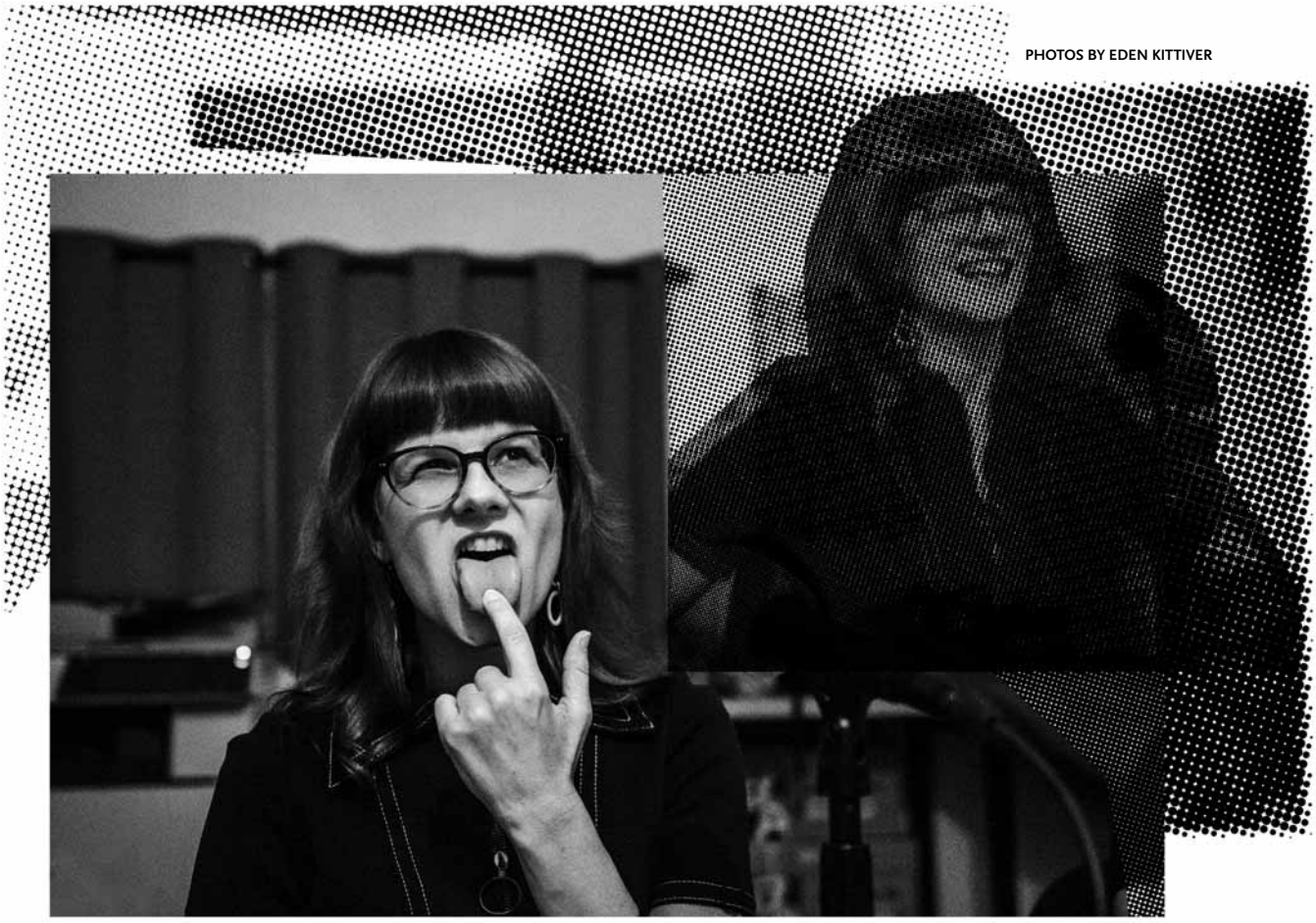
Ever: Or like, when I see kids at amusement parks—very big kids in strollers. I'm like, "What the hell is going on?" The parent's like "Oh they're tired." You're also eight. Oh wait, they have a leash on you, too. Run.

Allison: My mom was super hands-off as a parent. Especially because she had three kids, she was broke, and she was trying to get this thing off the ground. She was also starting her life over in a lot of ways. She also had to be young again, as a partying lesbian. Like, "I gotta get in the scene and meet people and party." I also think she was doing coke and stuff in the '80s.

Todd: How did you find out about that?

Allison: After she died, my little sister told me. Because my little sister was blackmailing her. I noticed that my little sister was a total rebel in a lot of ways and *way* wilder than me. She was always doing stuff that would have gotten anyone grounded for life, but she always seemed to skate by on it. Every time she would get in trouble, my sister would be like, "Well, I'm going to tell everyone that you do coke." But finally my mom sent her to Tennessee and said, "Okay you don't like it around here. Go live with your dad. See about those rules." My dad is strict. But I think my sister did good there. She spent a school year there. She worked at McDonald's and went to the rodeo every weekend. Finally, she was like, "Can I come home now?"

Ever: Rodeos are kinda fun. But not all the time.



PHOTOS BY EDEN KITTIVER

Allison: I think she loved it, but also I'm sure it was restrictive. We just weren't raised that way. We spent every summer in Tennessee, all of us, and that was always kind of a culture shock.
Todd: Also you were a gymnast.
Allison: Oh, yeah.
Ever: I can see it now, with the dance moves.
Todd: You were an exchange student in Thailand for year. What did you study there?
Allison: I repeated twelfth grade. I was already graduated so I didn't have to concentrate too much on particular classes. I took German in high school, so on my form I filled out German-speaking countries first but then I got to the fourth line—you had to have four choices—and I'm like, I can only think of three. I put Thailand because one of my mother's best friends—the woman she had her first real relationship with—worked internationally and was stationed in Thailand at the time. We had been on a little vacation to visit her there and I loved it.

They saw Thailand and said, "Oh we've never sent someone there. We'll send her there." I was in a village about an hour south of Bangkok and I was with a host family. I went to the local temple school down the street. It was fun. I loved Thailand and I loved all my friends and the teachers. My host mother was terrifying. Everything else was pretty cool. Back then, there were no cell phones, no internet. I would write letters to my friends and family, but that would be a month-long process.
Todd: Things were just slower. You just had large gaps of time. People from older generations, especially with zines—zines made sense because that's how fast everything else was moving, too. There wasn't this blitz of stuff *all* the time.. It would take two or three months sometimes to get a record in the mail. And that was the regular pace of things. So, want to talk about riot grrrl?
Allison: Okay.
Todd: Do you think riot grrrl would have happened if the University of Oregon had a student radio station?
Allison: Well, yeah. Honestly, riot grrrl was really spearheaded by Kathleen Hanna. She was the force behind it and a lot of us joined in. I met Molly Neuman in the dorms at University of Oregon. I had met Kathleen. We knew who each other were. I came back from Thailand after graduating from high school. Right after I came back, there was this summer before I went away to college in Eugene. I was hanging out all the time. I felt lost. I didn't really know who I was anymore or what was going on.

I saw Kathleen on the bus a lot. She looked like this mean "Tank Girl." She had a shaved head and was always glaring. Combat boots. I was very intrigued by her. She and her friends were all doing photography at Evergreen State College. They had a DIY art space called Reko Muse. They had shows there to help pay the rent. Lots of cool shows there.
Todd: The internet lies a lot, so I wanted to pass it by you. Coming up with the actual term, I read Jen Smith later of The Quails, wrote you a letter in the spring of 1991, and then she was a collaborating with the first zine you did, *Girl Germs*.
Allison: Jen didn't collaborate on our zine *Girl Germs*, just wrote the postcard to me.
Todd: She said that, "This summer is going to be a girl riot" and other reports say that she wrote, "We need to start a girl riot."
Allison: Yeah, something like that.
Todd: And then Molly started the zine *Riot Grrrl.* Is that correct?
Allison: It's kinda like that. A lot of riot grrrl stuff was happening before we even had that term. Bikini Kill was starting and they were talking about a lot of feminist issues. Me and Molly wanted to get involved and do stuff. We started Bratmobile, which was a band in theory for a long time before we did anything.

But we were very encouraged by Kathleen and Tobi (Vail). Then we played our first show, which was Bikini Kill's third show. We were involved in a community that was based in Olympia, even though we were still in Eugene a lot of the time. There were a lot of young

girls talking about politics, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape.

Also the first Gulf War was happening around that time, so we talked about the war. A lot of the guys we knew were seeming to get politicized suddenly. Seriously, Bush Sr. was talking about the draft, and all of a sudden the guys are like, "*What*? Not us!" Of course, no one should go to war. But Kathleen was like, "What about the war at home?" And she wrote a song about that.

Todd: Purely for my own curiosity, how many copies of *Girl Germs* were printed?

Allison: I have no idea. We reprinted them a lot. I'm sure I have the masters somewhere in a box of crap. I actually have the *Bikini Kill* master too.

Todd: They're called *archives*.

Allison: I know, I know.

Todd: What are we talking? Five hundred, a thousand?

Allison: Maybe? First of all, Tobi Vail and Donna Dresch had been doing their fanzines for a really long time, *Chainsaw* and *Jigsaw*. They really encouraged a lot of us to do fanzines. But Tobi would use this term "angry grrl zine" and so *Riot Grrrl* kinda came partially from that term she used.

Jen Smith, who lived in D.C.—there had been these Mount Pleasant riots, which was the neighborhood where a lot of punks lived—and those were based on some racist attacks by the cops. Jen was writing us and telling us about it and saying, "Hey, when you girls get here, we need to start a girl riot." What she meant was, "Hey we need to do some feminist actions," so that kinda started it.

Molly's father was involved in politics on Capitol Hill. He was a P.R. person for a lot of democrats, and he would help run campaigns. So he had an office that had a photocopier. She had the keys, so we would just go in. She was one of the only people who had a car then. She would borrow her dad's car so we could go to her dad's office and photocopy all of our zines all night.

That's when we also started this little one-off—once a week, hand-folded—*Riot Grrrl* zine as well. We just wanted to connect with the girls in D.C. who are doing stuff there as well and that was a way to do it. But those zines, in particular, were really made at the last minute. They're kinda really silly and stupid. It's weird to me that those are the zines that everyone hangs onto in their minds.

Ever: I liked them. I still have some. I should have brought them.

Griffin: People can relate to it.

Todd: Are you saying they're kinda like meeting minutes?

Allison: There was something about zines that—at least back then—were made in a really urgent way; immediate, and they were just a sign of that week, even.

Todd: Like flyers or putting something on a telephone pole.

Allison: And it was a way to communicate quickly. But they were not meant to last. It kinda bothers me the way that all this stuff is archived. It's like, "Well, that was meant to be thrown away. For a reason." 'Cause that shit wasn't well thought out. Some people were better writers than others. I think I was terrible. I hate the fact that any of my stuff is preserved.

Ever: You shouldn't feel bad about it. Those were some of the first that I saw, and I was *very* young at the time. For me, it was like, I *totally* get this. These women are talking about everything that I think of that nobody else at school gets. It was really powerful for me to see.

Todd: I want to echo what Ever is saying, which is that it's a template that people saw and were like, "Oh, you can do that?" It's that simple idea pulled off in itself; a lot of light bulbs went on.

Ever: "There's more like-minded people!"

Allison: It was a way to network, really. Inform community across the country.

Todd: I don't know if you still believe this or not. This was in an interview with *Dangerous Minds*. What are the "true riot grrrls"? [laughs] True versus not true, or do you still believe that?

Allison: You mean like who is in and who is out?

Todd: Yeah.

Allison: Well, I don't know. Did I really say that? What did I say? That's kind of awful.

Todd: Bikini Kill, Huggy Bear, Sleater-Kinney, Heavens To Betsy.

Allison: I think that there is a difference between people who directly identified as riot grrrls—or who were associated with riot grrrl in the media—but also people who were part of a broader community. I think it's all important and all those people are important. And also there were a lot of women in bands and in the community at that time who were labeled as riot grrrls who didn't want to be.

There was a whole lot of different stuff going on. But now, looking back—because I'm trying to document and archive that stuff—in my oral history of riot grrrl, I don't want to just interview people who directly identified as riot grrrls. I'm interested in this whole idea of us coming from a community and how that community and our friendships or interpersonal relationships lead to our political activism. How the personal is political and the political is personal. If I try to define that stuff, it's just because I'm trying to think of who identified that way and who didn't.

Todd: Who do you think would be some of the foremothers to riot grrrl? Who was Kathleen drawing from?

Allison: Before?

Todd: Yeah, I'm thinking of bands like, Poison Girls or even... parts of Crass?

Allison: Well I think that Kathleen was very influenced by Kathy Acker. Listen to Kathleen sing, X-Ray Spex, although she *claims* she hadn't heard them before, but I don't believe that. [laughter] I think we were very inspired by Babes In Toyland, L7. Those are two bands that really influenced a lot of us, and they were just slightly before us. Now, they got called riot grrrl a lot.

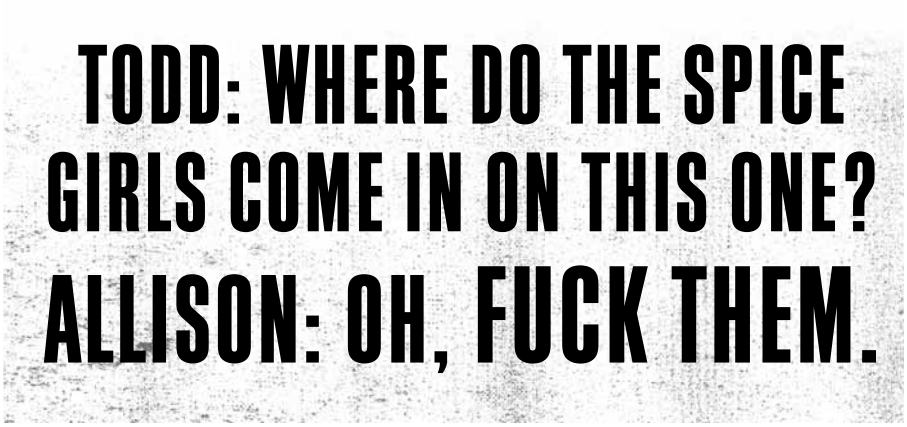
Todd: But almost retroactively.

Allison: Yeah. Which is so dumb because they definitely existed before us. I think that they didn't like being called that. It was just a thing. It was too bad because the media always just called any girls in music, roughly through the '90s, "riot grrrls." I never shied away from that term, but that's because I was directly involved.

I also felt like it was becoming another word for "feminist" or "feminism." I didn't want to reject it, and I was upset sometimes when other girls and girl bands did reject it, because I was like, "People are trying to pit all of us girls against each other and you're taking the bait." But I understand not wanting to be labeled and trying to point out the inaccuracy of it. Actually, it *is* sexist to label everyone "riot grrrl."

Todd: My perspective is—the media attention was, during this time, very, very quick and super fucking intense. It was almost simultaneously you'd see stuff in *People* magazine or large national publications. It did have a very sharp incline. And then, what happened?

Allison: The media's involvement? Well, it was an onslaught. It had a lot to do with Nirvana getting huge. People started looking at the Northwest, like, "Ooh what's next?" It was easy to look down to Olympia. We were



SEX STAINS - PHOTO BY CEETHREEDOM

so close and we had a very thriving scene. Kurt Cobain lived in Olympia for quite a while. Nirvana came to Olympia a lot to play shows, especially when they were from backwater Aberdeen. Olympia was the big city around. When they first started, I used to go see them play when I was in high school. They were called Skid Row back then. Which, I don't know if people really realize that.

Todd: Nirvana was?

Allison: They were totally called Skid Row. I swear.

Todd: They didn't know about the other Skid Row?

Allison: I don't know if they existed yet. This is pre-internet. You couldn't just look up the band name online. It was the late '80s.

Todd: Yeah, but Skid Row was like...

Allison: When did they start?

Todd: "18 and Life" was on the radio. (Skid Row started in '86, but wasn't big until their first release in '89.)

Allison: Well, I first saw Nirvana in '86 or '87. All I know is that they were called Skid Row for my senior year of high school. I went to Thailand. When I came back, all of a sudden everyone is talking about this band Nirvana and I didn't know who it was. Finally, we went to this show, and I was, "Ohh, you mean Skid Row."

I missed the whole year of them turning into Nirvana and becoming real popular. It was still in the realm of the Northwest. Once it got national, things got crazy for everyone. The thing about riot grrrl is that we didn't see a need for the mainstream media. We were making our own zines and we're writing our own this, that, and the other. I think for a lot of people involved in riot grrrl, the press was not beneficial because a lot of people weren't in bands. It only really could be seen as beneficial to people who had something to sell, like a record or a tour. You want people to come to your shows. But even at the time, those of us in bands felt like it was ruining this special thing we had.

Todd: There's a lot of attention you don't want or need. Like, "Great, now I have fifty knuckleheads at my show that I just don't want here. I'd rather have a show that's smaller and everybody's cool and we're okay."

Allison: Also they just got everything wrong. That was a bummer. They would somehow always get a hold of a bunch of our images. We all would swap photos back then, so I always got duplicates when I made my photos. I would also give the person I took a photo of a copy of the photo. That's why half my photos are in *The Punk Singer* (documentary on Kathleen Hannah) with no credit. Kathleen and Molly gave all of their archives to the Fales Archive. None of it's marked. But, *I* don't even know. Whatever, it's not a big deal, but that was just how we felt. There was no real idea of ownership.

Griffin: But also it goes into the theme of the media wanting to group all women together, too. It's just like, "They're all the same." And it's like, "We're different."

Ever: Whenever they did reports like *Fox Undercover*, in the '80s, early '90s, it would be like, "Party crew!" "Skinheads at basement shows" "Punk rock" and it'd be like in Orange County. And that's supposed to be everybody, the whole.

Todd: Can you give me a distinct time when you were like, "National media. This is so fucking stupid. I can't handle this anymore."?

Allison: I think it was the summer of '92. I spent summers in D.C. I was living in a group house with Kathleen. She was pretty stressed out about the press. While she got most of the attention for her band and for riot grrrl, a lot of that was negative. She had to bear the brunt of a lot of hard stuff. They finally did a media blackout, because she was like, "People are bugging us and writing crazy stuff."

The problem is—the media blackout—they still wrote their articles. They just wrote more crazy stuff. [laughs] They were saying things like, "She was raped by her father," and stuff that was not true. They were reading into her songs. But also, outing, you know? What if it were true? They're outing her as a stripper in national media without

her having any control over that. Kathleen was the target of a lot of it. That's when I was like, "Fuck this." I joined the media blackout. My bandmates didn't really agree with it so much, but they had kinda grown up in a media-friendly environment.

Todd: Where do the Spice Girls come in on this one?

Allison: Oh, fuck them. Wasn't it some Spice Girls anniversary recently and they were all talking about "girl power"? I was like, "No, they stole that term from us. They straight up took it."

Todd: For the Spice Girls, it's a capitalist gesture. Period. "We have girl-*purchasing* power," which is very problematic for me.

Allison: That's the one thing with the press; it came in and tried to turn us into a product, a fashion statement. It defangs and declaws your message. And it ends up pitting people against each other, tearing people apart, "Oh I can't believe *you* got interviewed," or, "Oh, why did you talk?" or whatever. On top of it, they're just taking your culture from you, repackaging it, and trying to sell it back to the public, to you. All of a sudden, Urban Outfitters has all these fake riot grrrl-sounding bands playing in the background. What was Gwen Stefani's fucking band?

Griffin: No Doubt.

Allison: Yeah! No Doubt came along. Shit like that was just such a rip off of what was trendy, which was riot grrrl. The Spice Girls—"Girl Power" was a term that Kathleen definitely coined and used. Okay, I know it's not a stretch to put those words together, but at the same time, that was definitely a riot grrrl term and their marketing person took it.

Todd: Has anybody tried to trademark riot grrrl?

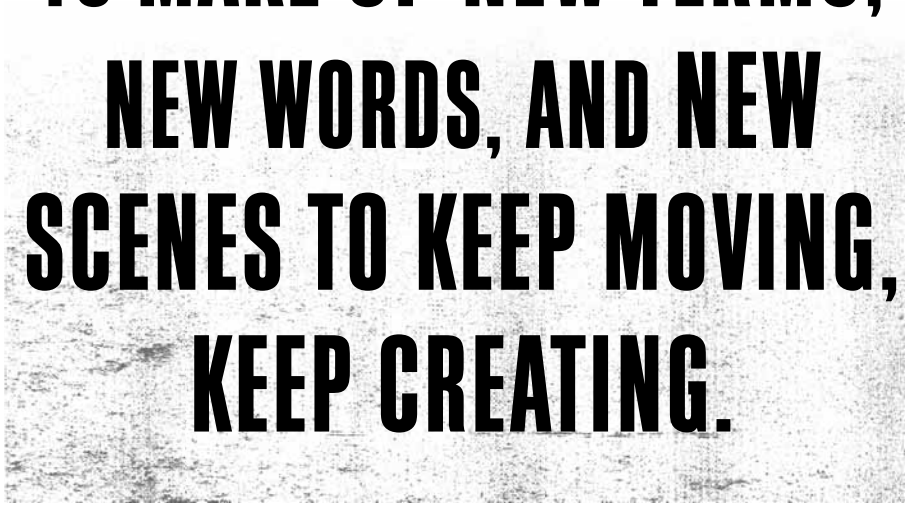
Allison: No. In fact, we would always write in all the zines and flyers, "This is not trademarked. Take it and run with it and do what you want." So we left the door wide open. Looking back, sometimes I don't think we did things in the smartest way. But we didn't see that there was a huge future for all this, or that there was anything to be marketed, sold, or packaged.

Todd: Also, during this time, even though there was media saturation, something happens in one part of the United States and two or three years later, it goes to another part. It wasn't as instantaneous. Now it can happen [snaps] like that.

Ever: With that, do you think that riot grrrl is still relevant today? Or do you think that it's grown or evolved into something else?

Allison: To me, riot grrrl is just a certain time and place: a certain era of the first half of the '90s and that it was a strain of third wave feminism, in a punky way. But I feel like it's important for people to make up new terms, new words, and new scenes. You have to keep moving, keep creating. I'm happy if people felt at all inspired by that—and want to take some of those ideas and run with it—but I feel it's not productive to keep using those words for new stuff, necessarily.

Todd: That's an essential challenge with punk. How do you regard the past, keep it in context, continue doing your own stuff, then thread that stuff to today to remain relevant?



Griffin: I think with riot grrrl—with something that was so political—it's important to be naming new things, not to keep saying that any femme who has an instrument is a "riot grrrl." It's really important to be making active, mindful choices. "This is a new thing that I'm doing. This is a different thing."

Allison: Yeah, there's gotta be new ideas.

Griffin: It's limiting to women. I moved to L.A. in 2013. I remember seeing Slutever for the first time, falling in love with them, and then listening to an interview. They were talking about someone calling them riot grrrl, and they were like, "It's 2013. We just play music." It was just this point of learning for me, that women can be a lot of things. We don't all just have to be this one thing.

Allison: The labeling can be so loaded, because it's like, how do you react to it? If you react too knee jerk to it, it's like you're saying, "I'm not a feminist!" You don't want to be like that and I don't want other people to be like that. At the same time, you deserve to be able to represent yourself and call yourself what you want or identify with what you want.

Todd: It also depends who your audience is, for context. So, with Bratmobile, when Molly Neuman quit, she was co-owner of Lookout! Records and the manager of The Donnas. When you were playing in Bratmobile together, was she starting to do those things?

Allison: Well, she met Chrisser (Applegren), who later become her husband—who was also co-owner of Lookout!—on our first tour. They ended up getting together pretty quickly. They got married pretty young, and so she moved to Oakland. Then she became co-owner.

Then she managed The Donnas, later also The Locust and Ted Leo. With The Donnas, a lot of what she was doing was trying to help them avoid the mistakes that we had made, in some of the ways that we've been treated as women in music. They did sign to a major label at one point and I think that they were treated in a pretty sexist way. Allison, who's an amazing guitarist and smoking hot, people—like execs—were saying that she shouldn't wear a short skirt 'cause her cellulite shows.

Ever: I remember seeing them at early shows, too, and having guys scream ugly-ass shit to her all the time. I remember one show she was wearing a T-shirt that said "Eat a Dick." She was like, "Hey guys, do you guys like my shirt?" and some guys were like, "You look like you ate a pile of dicks!" And she just had to tough it out and continue to play.

Allison: They got harassed and dismissed a lot. Their music was very accessible, kinda Ramones-ish. I feel like if anyone could have gone far... Think of all the boy rock bands who did at that time. Why didn't The Donnas? I think there was just *no* space for women who play their own instruments and rock—in the mainstream—or it wasn't given to them, or allowed.

Ever: I liked their really early stuff, even before they were The Donnas and they were The Electrocutes. *They* weren't given a pass but bands like Good Charlotte were, and they were terrible!

Allison: And not only were those guy bands terrible for the most part, but a lot of them

BRATMOBILE, 2002 - PHOTO BY ANTONIA TRICARICO

SEX STAINS - PHOTO BY CEETHREEDOM

are also just gross; not cute or anything. No one was telling them to worry about their cellulite.

Todd: Tell me if this is inappropriate. I don't really put a lot of credence into Wikipedia, but Wikipedia said...

Allison: I am not that age! I'm twenty-five! [laughs]

Todd: It says the 1994 Bratmobile onstage breakup was quote, "disturbing."

Allison: That's hilarious. Yeah, our breakup was pretty dramatic. Traumatic. We had really grown apart from each other. I think the pressure that was put on us to be spokespeople, it was too much. We'd really grown apart. We also grew up really differently. We had different values and weren't really able to talk about it.

There were big schisms in our scene, who's more radical, who's not, who just wants to hang out with the guys. We weren't on the same page anymore and we weren't talking about it. We were silently hating each other.

We got offered to be flown out to this show in New York. We didn't think a whole lot of it. It seemed cool. We get there and nothing's working out. I was having all these personal problems. I was being stalked by these girls who were part of the broader riot grrrl scene. Riot grrrl was eating itself at that point, and it was a lot of, "Ohh, who's more radical than who?" "Who's more oppressed than who?" "Let's all fight each other and kill each other."

It was bad. I felt like the singers in the bands got the most shit for everything. We were made to feel responsible for *everything* and everyone's feelings. I'm just one of those people who takes everything on. I'm always the first person to think I'm wrong. "Oh, what did I do? How can I make this better?" And you just end up digging a hole where people just kick you more.

Not to go into too much detail, but it wasn't a good situation. Those girls came to the show in New York, but of course, *I* put them on the guest list. So I invited the bullshit. They were angry and causing problems all over the place.

During our show they were selling zines and some guy grabbed them, which is not cool. They came and tried to stop the whole show and grab the mic. Then I gave them the mic. They jumped on stage and were like, "That guy punched us!" It was complete chaos. Molly and Erin were like, "Get these people off." Joan Jett was on stage, apparently in Erin's corner. She was like, "Do you want me to do it? I'll kick them out. I'll kick them off." We should have.

Anyway, it was just out of control. Finally, I got the mic back. We finished and Molly and Erin were like, "That's it, I quit." I was like, "What?" I was crying. It was a bad situation. It was mostly my fault. I think Mother's Day was the next day.

Todd: So, after Bratmobile, you're living in D.C. and you worked at *The Washington Post*?

Allison: I did. I had a few jobs.

Todd: Which was the job that exposed you to, "A lot of drooling men, which is gross"?

Allison: Well, I was a stripper for three years in Washington D.C. as were several punk girls from the scene. It was hard to leave that after a while because you're really used to the money. You make the most money per hour. It was the only thing that can put you in the same earning realm as, say, professional men.

I'd never seen money like that in my whole life, so I was like, "Woohoo!" I just couldn't believe that you could just take your clothes off and guys would throw money at you. I was like, "Oh my god, they're so dumb." [laughs] "This is hilarious!" So I enjoyed it at first, but then once it becomes your grind, it's just like any job. The boss sucks, he never cleans anything, doesn't care about us. The costumers are awful and treat us like shit. It's customer service, really. But it was hard to also not have that outside scene. They didn't really accept it. They were like, "How can you be feminists and be strippers?"

Todd: Not considering sex work as work, labor as labor.

Allison: Yeah, and treating you weird because you work there; just like, "I'm just like you." Whatever. I finally left there when I got my first office job, which was in this dictionary translation place, which was cool because I got to work with Thai dictionaries.

Much later, I found out that all the contracts were with the State Department. It wasn't until I got fired. I was having all these protesting things on my cubicle and I was really outspoken. I got the boot, and I was like, "I'm gonna fight them!" My boyfriend at the time was like, "Do you know who

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these people are? My ex-wife works for the same company. They are CIA. Don't fuck with them." I didn't know!

Anyway, I was doing evil work. It was then that I was asking around and I randomly got a job at the style section of *The Washington Post*. There was an older punk guy and a few people from the scene there. Once I started working there, we just got more and more punks working there, so that was cool. I was just like a news aide, copy aide, editorial aide, so just lots of assistant work. I wasn't really writing. Every now and then we'd write the gossip column, "Names and Faces" on the weekends, or we'd type the TV listings. I did the arts listings in the spring and the fall, so I would write one-sentence things about arts. It was really fun but it was just a job.

Todd: It's nice sometimes to just check out at work.

Allison: Well, I'll tell you what; the free table was nice there. I didn't have to buy anything for years. Everything was there: vitamins, condoms, hair dye, shampoo, books, CDs.

Griffin: Stuff that would get sent to the *Post*?

Allison: Yeah and they can't take it, so all the writers were just dumping stuff on the free table all the time. Those were the good days.

Todd: What brought you to Los Angeles? Because you were in D.C. for thirteen years?

Allison: At least. I'd been going there off and on for years before that. I first started spending summers and spring breaks in D.C. in '91. Then I moved there officially '94-ish/'95. Then I

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moved away—2007, 2008—to New York for two to three years, had fun, spent *all* of my money.

That was the thing about D.C. You can have all these pretty cool jobs that let you come and go, but I haven't found that to be the case anywhere else yet. L.A. made sense. It isn't cold here. The weather, it was not hard to convince me with that. It just seemed like life was a little bit cheaper and a little easier out here than New York. At least you got more for your money here. I just felt like, well that's the last place I'm gonna live in the U.S. and then once I finish with that, I'll just have to leave the country.

Todd: What's something surprising that you really enjoy about L.A. that you didn't predict?

Allison: Just how much different stuff there is to do here and how many different scenes there are. How you can move in and out of all these different scenes and neighborhoods and never see the same person again for months. I think my observations aren't much different than other people.

I didn't realize *how* East Coast I had become living out there. I was always kind of a West Coast weirdo out there, but then coming back, all sorts of flakiness and slow just make me so uptight. I'm like, "What the fuck!?" "Why are you walking like that?" "Why are you driving like that?" "Why!" Everyone will text you and say they're gonna do something and don't do it, or they're hours late, and that's *acceptable*. It makes me crazy.

Todd: How did Sex Stains come about? The quote I have is, "I'm in a band that feels really different from any other band that I've been in."

Allison: I moved out here with a boyfriend and we broke up within six months of being here. I was like, "Oh shit. If I had known it was gonna go down hill, I would have stayed in New York." My response to that situation was to go out as much as possible, hit the street, meet as many people as possible, and try as many new things as possible. That was great. I met so many people. I got to know the scene. It was exhausting but it was fun.

Then I started Cool Moms with these girls. That was fun for a while, but it didn't really work out. I kept hearing of opportunities to be in these tribute bands, so I did that. There was a Rough Trade band tribute, a Slits tribute, a Crass tribute. I did all of those and those were really great experiences. I got to meet and see some really great musicians in town, get to know them, see how they play, and see how they behave. "Oh, I really like that person," or "I really love the way that person plays." Those were the things in the back of my mind. I want to be in a band with *that* person and *that* person and *that* person. It took a while, talking to people and asking. I wanted to be in a band with two singers because I just don't want to be the only one. I like the interaction of two singers, like in X. I think it's more interesting.

Sharif and I started the band, then we got David involved. I had been asking David to start a band for a while. Dante was in the band originally, but he quit, and then Mecca joined. I met her at the Crass tribute night and she was by far the best singer that night. She's a professional dancer and chorographer. She's really amazing. She was dynamic on stage and just was fantastic. And then our bassist, Pachy, who's in Prettiest Eyes, he joined a little bit later. He is just one of the best musicians I've ever met. He's our secret weapon.

Todd: I really like Sex Stains. I was pleasantly surprised. I had no expectations, but just how dancey and very listenable it is. I think someone at the *LA Weekly* put it as "intelligently aggressive" or "intelligently confrontational." It's really good.

Allison: I wanted something that sounded different than things I had done in the past. I also think that we are the sum of our parts. It's going to be different no matter what. They're all really great musicians, great people. We just played on the East Coast in September and even Ian MacKaye was like, "Allison, this is the best band you've ever been in."

Todd: You throw a bloody tampon on a guy one day and the next day he's complimenting your band!

Allison: I didn't throw that at him! He thinks I threw a tampon at him, but I told him, "I threw it at your audience! Cause *they* suck."

Todd: You said that "Adulting is hard." What part?

I DIDN'T THROW A TAMPON AT IAN MACKAYE BUT I TOLD HIM, "I THREW IT AT YOUR AUDIENCE! CAUSE THEY SUCK."

DEEP LUST, 1999 - PHOTOS BY ANTONIA TRICARICO

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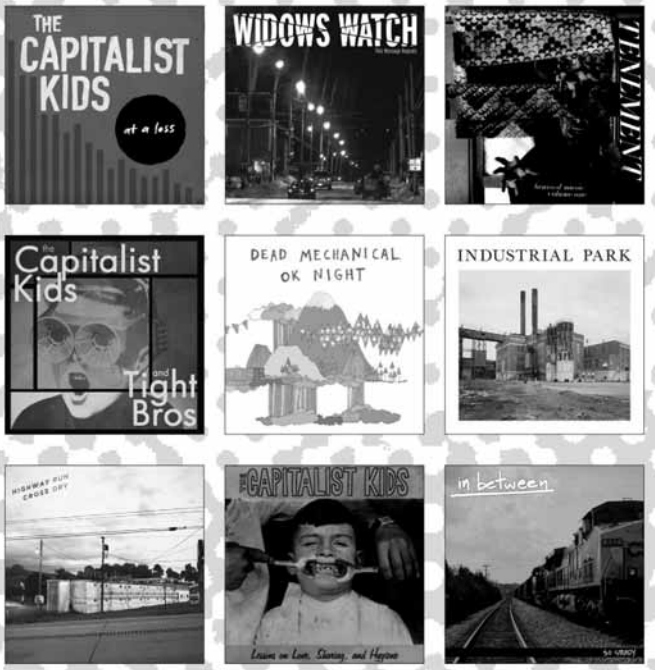

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I DO TAKE THINGS ON A LOT AND FEEL FOR HOW HORRIBLE A LOT OF THINGS ARE, BUT THEN I ALSO LIKE TO HANG OUT AND HAVE FUN.

Allison: Getting up in the morning, cooking for yourself. I'm someone who's perpetually single, so I never have anyone to help. Maybe having another person around would just be a chore in and of itself. I never really have anyone around to help take care of me or take care of anything. Of course I have friends and friends help each other, but I don't really feel like I have anyone I can *totally* rely on. So maybe that's it. It's just life. It's hard for everyone.

Todd: One thing we passed over is that you are in the journalism program at USC and you're working on an oral history of riot grrrl. Is that what you're working on for the program?

Allison: I was an Annenberg fellow at USC Annenberg, so I got a full ride, for last year. I'm extending into this year, so a little bit's on me, 'cause I fucked up. [laughs] I applied to USC for the Masters in Specialized Journalism in the Arts. I got the fellowship. That enabled me to be able to do it, 'cause otherwise I couldn't have gone to USC. It's really crazy expensive.

Todd: At the end of it will you have a book manuscript ready?

Allison: No. I'm really behind on my thesis. I think the whole book is too much for the thesis; maybe a dissertation down the road. What I will turn in for my thesis will be a sample portion of that. What I've decided to do for that is focus on just Bratmobile. I've interviewed Molly and Erin. I'm trying to decide if I write myself in or if I actually have someone interview me.

But I'm finished with my credits now and it was a really great experience. I focused on radio/audio stuff, which I really enjoy doing. I did a lot of radio pieces during my time there. Two of them aired on KPCC's *Off Ramp*. It was exciting to get paid for school work. I was bragging to my teacher, "Oh my god, I get this much money!" and she was like, "That's not very good money for radio." Well, I *had* to do it for credit so it was cool to get money for it, too.

Todd: I'm just going to end on one of your quotes and you can expand on it. "I suppose life is shit, but I'm going to die trying to have fun and make the most of it."

Allison: Yes. I said, "I think life is shit?" I can't believe that.

Ever: It's honest, though. It's true, and every time I do see you, you're having fun.

Allison: I think I can be pretty dramatic. I do take things on a lot and feel for how horrible a lot of things are, but then I also like to hang out and have fun. What's that Emma Goldman quote? Dancing at the revolution?

Todd: Well, thank you Allison Wolfe. That was a pleasure.

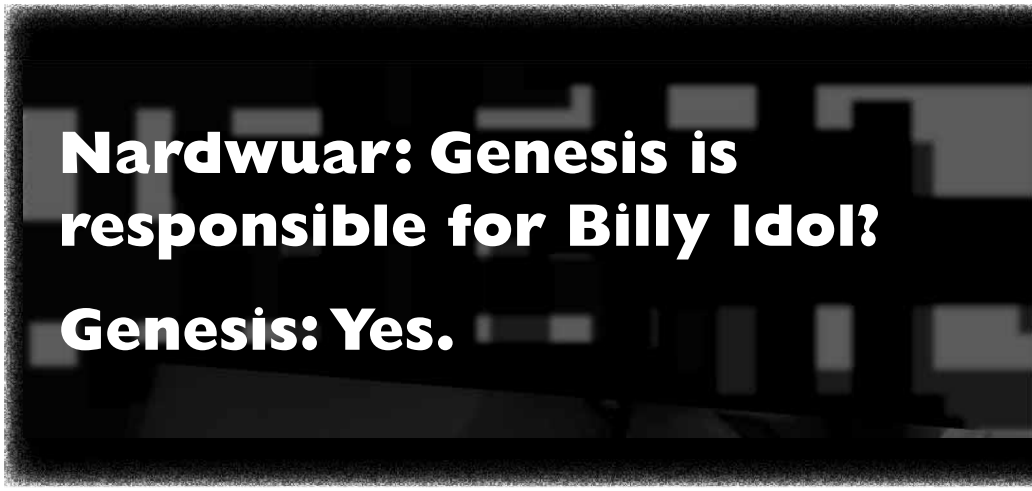
Nardwuar the Human Serviette vs. Psychic TV

Photo: Joe Klymkiw

Introduction and interview by Nardwuar | Live photos by Jeff Schock
Nardwuar photo by Joe Klymkiw | Layout by Becky Bennett

From h/er involvement and formation of COUM Transmissions in Britain in the late '60s, to Throbbing Gristle, to Psychic TV, Genesis P-Orridge has inspired many people to simply start making art. The first time I saw Genesis was on a Target Video VHS where s/he was sucking face with an audience member all while playing bass. With Genesis anything was possible! Genesis uses the word "we" when s/he refers to h/erself. A true superhero of the modern era, it was very exciting to talk to h/er and h/ers longtime collaborator Edley ODowd.

Nardwuar: Who are you?
Genesis P-Orridge: Yes, hello! Yes, hello!
Nardwuar: You are Genesis?
Genesis: That's true. You want to know who we are? Yes, Genesis P-Orridge of Psychic TV and many other projects.
Nardwuar: And Gen, who do you have beside you?
Genesis: Good question, really. [Laughs] It's Edley ODowd.
Edley ODowd: It's Edley ODowd. That's me.
Nardwuar: Welcome to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
Genesis: Thank you.
Nardwuar: Right off the bat, Genesis, I have a gift for you. Brian, come back, you… [Nardwuar hands a Rolling Stones bootleg, *Brian Come Back You Bastard!* 7" to Genesis P-Orridge.]
Genesis: Are forgiven.
Nardwuar: Bastard!
Genesis: Don't call me a bastard!
Nardwuar: No, that's what that 7" is!
Genesis: Is that right?
Nardwuar: Yes, Brian Jones, your idol.
Genesis: I would never call him a bastard because he was legitimate.
Nardwuar: You actually met him because your dad cleaned ABC studios?
Genesis: That's true, yes. I also met his two bastards, Julian and Julian—Julian to Pat Andrews and Julian to Linda, who married Donovan. I've met both of those sons and they were bastards.
Nardwuar: And, as well, you have his jacket, too.
Genesis: You do talk weird, don't you? Is that part of the shtick?
Nardwuar: Well, you have his jacket.
Genesis: Shouting at people! [laughs]
Nardwuar: Well, it's Genesis, I mean…
Genesis: What is it, Aardvark?
Edley: Nardwuar.
Genesis: Nardwuar.
Edley: Nardwuar, the Human Serviette.
Genesis: Yes, okay. Actually we were just reading something today, online, about Brian Jones. There's a new book just come out and we've had this theory for a while—you're aware that Brian Jones, John Lennon, and Jimmy Hendrix were about to form a group together. And they made several demo tapes at Olympic Studios, of which we have some—copies.
Nardwuar: And I was really confused by this. What is going on here exactly? *Force It*, UFO. [Nardwuar gives UFO's *Force It* LP to Genesis P-Orridge.]
Genesis: That's the name of a sort of early heavy metal-type band, UFO. The picture is myself and Cosey Fanni Tutti. It's called *Force it*, which in United States-ian language means bathroom—not a toilet, a bathroom—hence the set. They thought it would be funny if we were "forcing it" in some kind of sexual innuendo and they wanted ambiguous people. They wanted it to look like it could be two women; it could be whatever, ambiguous gender. Even then, way, way back, '76.
Nardwuar: So how did you hook up with UFO in '75? And this is the German issue.
Genesis: Is it? Oh, right. Well Sleazy—Peter Christopherson who was in TG, Throbbing Gristle—also was a partner in Hypnosis. They were commissioned to do this cover. So he said, "Do you want to get paid to get naked in a bathroom?" And we said, "Yes." And that's how it happened.
Edley: Tell him how cold it was.
Genesis: Freezing. It was so cold. It was in the winter, in London, in a house that was derelict and they built this set in the house. There was no heat, no hot water, so it was cold water they were spraying over us. It doesn't even show in the picture. It was miserable. What a long day!
Nardwuar: And Genesis, Sleazy took promo pics of the Sex Pistols that Malcolm McLaren called too shocking?
Genesis: Yes, he did. [Changes his tone, imitating Nardwuar.] Yes, he did! He took photos of the Sex Pistols and it was too shocking! Aardvark.
Nardwuar: Nardwuar, the Human Servi…
Edley: …ette.
Genesis: Tu, Brutus.
Nardwuar: Acme Attractions—are you into punk? Acme Attractions?
Genesis: We've never been into punk. It's too traditional.
Nardwuar: Well, that exposed you to punk, Acme Attractions?
Genesis: No, it didn't. No, sorry, you're wrong. Myself and Sleazy were commissioned to redesign Acme Attractions. We called it Boy and to this day, Boy the brand is still going. We got paid sixty pounds to design the shop, come up with the logo and the name and the brand and everything. But the person who exposed me to punk was Sue Cat Woman.
Nardwuar: She was your girlfriend, right?
Genesis: Yes, for three years officially and a couple more after that. And an amazing woman.
Nardwuar: She knew everybody.
Genesis: She knew everybody and she'd take me around to all the pubs. We'd see The Damned and we saw The Jam when they'd not made any records. Eater, everyone. It was a pretty interesting time.
Nardwuar: Did you audition Billy Idol?
Genesis: [Laughs] Yes, yes, yes we did. What a terrible thing we've done.
Nardwuar: Genesis is responsible for Billy Idol?
Genesis: Yes. At that time, my friend at university was trying to have a band—the guy who had Acme Attractions—John Craven, he wanted to have a band to rival the Sex Pistols. He goes, "Malcolm has the Sex Pistols so I want a band for my shop. I'm going to call it Chelsea. Could you audition people to be in my band?" So that's what we did. We went down to a warehouse where he stored old jukeboxes. Various young guys came up, playing. One of them got up and said, "I'm Bill Broad and I want to play rhythm guitar." We turned to John and said, "He's a natural. Pick him." And so we picked out the band which then became Generation X. And in their first official biography they credit me with having pulled them together.
Nardwuar: Genesis, you liked The Nipple Erectors more than Crass?
Genesis: Yes, yes, this is true. Well, wouldn't you? I mean, Crass means boring and stupid and Nipple Erectors means exciting and sensual. Aardvark pit, pit viper.
Nardwuar: Genesis, did you make a minefield?
Genesis: Yes. [laughs] You mean a real minefield that exploded? Yes, yes we did, yes. Way back in the '70s with COUM Transmissions. At the Bradford Arts Festival in a field. Nobody thought it was real. We got all this barbed wire and we put a fence of barbed wire around it, but I'd made all these homemade bombs. It was in the days when you could still buy the ingredients legally, before the IRA thing. And I'd find out how to mix fertilizer and sugar and things and make explosions. And so it said, "Danger, minefield, do not enter," et cetera. And of course, people just can't resist and they think, "Oh, it can't be a minefield! Surely not." So people would climb in and then they would trip these wires and off would go these big, huge flash bangs around them. It was fun.



Nardwuar: Psychic TV, quote, "I'm looking for you." And I was really curious—you have that song, "I'm Looking for You." What can you say about Anton LaVey?
Genesis: There's a connection?
Nardwuar: He played on one of your records—*Joy*, Psychic TV.
Genesis: Well, he didn't play. He's on it, we sampled him. [laughs] But we did reproduce his Satanic Mass. He gave me the old tapes. We took it in the studio and cleaned it up so it could be re-released as a CD and—he's an interesting man. Fun, very funny. The doctor, doctor LaVey.

Genesis: And the place was a sort of an ad-hoc independent art centre called Western Front. They also were friends with General Idea who were another ad-hoc group of artists in Toronto. General Idea did *File* magazine, which was a sort of pastiche of life, and then the Western Front did The Image Bank Request List where you wrote your name, your address, and anything you wanted people to send you that you needed for projects.

And so, for example, Ana Banana, who is Canadian, wanted anything to do with bananas. What a surprise. And William

Edley: Genesis has actually seen The Toilet Böys.
Genesis: Yes, we threw sweets at you once, didn't we? [laughs]
Edley: That is a good story! They weren't sweets. They were…
Nardwuar: Tampons?
Edley: No, they were pharmaceutical…
Genesis: Pills. Well, they were pills.
Nardwuar: Where was this?
Edley: This was at—there was an opening of a hair salon at a sort of… shopping place in… Where is that? Chelsea?
Genesis: Manhattan, yes.

We've never been into punk. It's too traditional.

Nardwuar: He did play keyboards. Did you think about getting him to play keyboards?
Genesis: Have you ever heard him play fucking keyboards?
Nardwuar: On his record he does an okay job.
Genesis: It was torment! That was what we all dreaded when we went to the black house, is that at about eleven o'clock at night he'd get a little bit tipsy and happy and he'd suddenly say, "Let's go in the kitchen!" and we'd be like, "Oh, no. That's where all his keyboards are." And about twenty cats. Then he would sit down—and there'd be this stink of cat piss—and he would start playing bombastic music. He had this thing that the next music after industrial and punk would be bombastic. And he was ahead of the curve with his bombastic keyboards. I mean, it was sweet for about a half hour, but after four hours it started to get really difficult to put up with it.
Nardwuar: I have another gift for you, Genesis. A laserdisc, *Poetry in Motion*, and it features William Burroughs who you met through a Canadian magazine. Is that true? Through a Canadian magazine you met William Burroughs? [Nardwuar gives Genesis a laserdisc.]
Genesis: In a sort meandering way, yes. So, anyway, we got this magazine, *File*—and in it was something called The Image Bank Request List—which was based in Vancouver. How about that?
Edley: A Canadian connection!

Burroughs put in an ad titled "Camouflage for 1984" and we thought hey, that's a really smart thing to put, because it was in '72 or something. It seemed a long way off then, '84. But also, we thought, surely he hasn't put his real address. Why would he put his real address? But we thought well maybe, you never know. So we wrote to him and he wrote back and said, "Whenever you're in London, come and see me. Get in a taxi. I'll pay for it."
Nardwuar: Thank you The Western Front in Vancouver for getting together…
Genesis: Burroughs and me! Me!
Nardwuar: Now, I was curious, Edley, what did you invent with The Toilet Böys?
[Nardwuar hands a Toilet Böys CD to Edley ODowd]
Genesis: It's your turn now!
Edley: The New York Dolls meet The Runaways.
Nardwuar: I was fascinated by The Toilet Böys. Miss Guy, did she/he date Tracey Lords?
Edley: No, that's not true. Sean Pierce—who's next to Miss Guy—we were all on our first trip to L.A., trying to make the scene there, and we went to a gay club where Sean—who's not gay at all—met Tracey Lords.
Genesis: He's not gay at all.
Edley: He's not gay at all. And we proceeded to have kind of a party with her, but I do believe that Sean and Tracey went off and slept elsewhere that evening.
Nardwuar: What have you told Genesis about The Toilet Böys?

Edley: Manhattan somewhere. And they asked The Toilet Böys to perform a short set. So Genesis and Lady J came, stood in the front row, and they were pelting Miss Guy with pharmaceutical pills until she became visibly annoyed, which was kind of hilarious. [laughs]
Genesis: I don't even know why we did that. Something got us in the mood, but I don't know what it was.
Edley: Guy said to me after the fact, "Jen and Jacky, what was that about?!" [laughs]
Nardwuar: Did you spit on John Peel?
Genesis: Yes, yes, we did do that. [laughs] He wrote about that, yes. The first time we met him, yes. That was long before punk, too. That was '72, '71. John Peel came into a hall in Yorkshire where we were at the time and we thought how do we get him to talk to us without just saying "We like what you do."? So we went up and said, "We really like what you do." We spat on him and said, "Don't worry, that's the way we show our love."
Edley: I didn't know that. I did not know that story. [laughs]
Genesis: So he nicknamed us Goz Rock, because goz means spit in England.
Nardwuar: Ian Curtis of Joy Division, he talked you out of suicide?
Genesis: No, no, no, no, that's not true. I don't know where you got that one from. He was the—I was the last person he spoke to before he died. But he did have my song about trying to commit suicide memorized. In that last phone call he sang it to me word perfect and

Photos: Jeff Schock

we thought he's going to try and kill himself. And so we— this is the day before cell phones, before most people even had answering machines in Britain—started ringing anyone we could think of in Manchester saying, "You've got to get around to Ian's house. He's going to try and kill himself." And the ones we got through to went, "Nah, he's just being dramatic." We went, "No, we think he's really going to try and do it," and no one would go and check. And that's why we're still angry at certain people.

Nardwuar: Did Sleazy's parents really know the queen?

Genesis: Yes, they were good friends. Lord and Lady Derman Christpherson were such good friends of the queen that they would go there for tea and dinner and hang out and chat over dinner, just like any other couple out with friends. That always made me a little worried, a bit concerned. But it did confirm that she knew who we were and she did not like me.

Nardwuar: So you actually came up.

Genesis: Oh, yes. Yes, we did. They were sitting there and the queen turned to Sleazy's mother and said, "So, what's Peter doing these days?' And she said, "Oh, he's working with this artist called Genesis P-Orridge," and the queen, apparently, sort of went backwards slightly and went, "Oh, oh dear, oh," and then she turned to the head of MI5 and said, "We know all about this person, don't we?" and then he told them, "You should get your son away from this person, Genesis. He's a very bad influence. He's trouble. Get him away," but it just made Sleazy want to be nearer.

Nardwuar: Were your kids mad, Genesis, that you got breasts instead of a car? [laughs]

Genesis: Where does he get this stuff?

Edley: That's not even ever been in an interview.

Genesis: It might, it might have, it might have. That was my younger daughter, Janesse. She's thirty-one and we thought we should ring them up and say, you know, "Papa's got breasts"—because someone would be bound to tell them—and all she said was, "Are you

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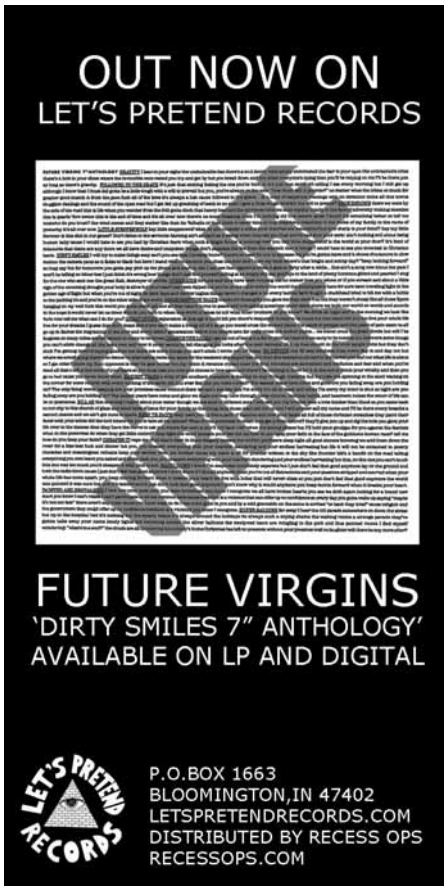
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We tell what we really feel is happening at any given moment. And that's rare. Most people are trying to succeed. We're not.

serious?" And we thought, "Oh, she doesn't like this." "You got breasts when you could have spent that money on getting me a new car?!" She was outraged that we wasted money when we could have given it to her. But she got over it within minutes. But, otherwise they weren't bothered at all, didn't care.

Nardwuar: How much money would it take to look like you, Genesis?

Genesis: [laughs] Sixty-six years of stress.

Nardwuar: Like, for instance, what would it take for Edley to look like you?

Genesis: Oh, about $300,000.

Nardwuar: Did you, Genesis, tell Zodiac Mindwarp to get a cock ring?

Genesis: Yes! [laughs] I've told a lot of people to do that. [laughs] Yes, you've got good memory.

Nardwuar: Why should people care about Psychic TV?

Genesis: Why should they care about Psychic TV? Well, hopefully, they care about what we say. I mean that's more important, always. And what we stand for, what we represent. And that's what's been happening. We're selling out nearly everywhere we play now. And that's all over the world. To think that there are enough people in every country we get invited to to fill venues, people who come and they know about us. They've read the Psychic Bible. They've read things that we've said and they've even probably watched your strange thing, because we don't know what to call it. They believe that we're one of the few lots of people who are telling them an authentic truth, that we don't sugar-coat things. We tell them what we really feel is happening at any given moment. And that's rare. Most people are trying to succeed. We're not. We're trying to talk to everyone—make their lives a little better and the idea of change a little easier.

Nardwuar: Well, thanks very much! Psychic TV, keep on rocking in the free world and doot doola doot doo…

Edley: Doot-doo!

Genesis: Pit Viper!

Watch a video of this interview at nardwuar.com

TOP FIVES
RAZORCAKE

Adam Perry
• Tilt, The Criminals, live at Gilman, 01/01/17
• Dave Hause And The Mermaid, toyGuitar, live at Thee Parkside, 02/04/17
• The Women's March in Oakland, 01/21/17
• Sleater-Kinney, *Live in Paris* LP
• Welcoming Adela Elizabeth Covington into the world! (01/16/17)

Andy Garcia
1. Uranium Club, *All of Them Naturals* LP
2. Annie Anxiety, *Soul Possession* LP
3. The Wraith, *Shadow Flag* EP
4. The Autistics, *Turn Up the Volts* LP
5. Erick Nervous, *Teen Distortion Art Junk Music* EP

Aphid Peewit
• Dead Ending, *Ivanka Wants Her Orange Back* 7"
• D.O.A., *Fucked Up Donald* 7"
• Lumpy And The Dumpers, *Huff My Sack* LP
• *Gimme Danger: Story of the Stooges* DVD
• Guyana Punch Line, *Maximum Smashism*

Art Ettinger
• Various Artists, *Oi! the Tape Volume 2* CS
• ANTiSEEN, *Live at Rebel Sound Pittsfield, MA 11-20-2010* CD
• The Dollyrots, *Whiplash Splash* LP
• Greg Graffin, *Millport* LP
• The Bombpops, *Fear of Missing Out* LP

Billy Kostka
• Lysol, *Wired* 7"
• Midnight Mines, *If You Can't Find a Partner Use a Wooden Chair*
• Booji Boys, Self-titled
• Beta Boys, *After Dark*
• The Dead C, *Trouble*

Candace Hansen
Top 5 Spring Cleaning Punk House Mysteries
1. It is safe to eat old Del Taco and Taco Bell hot sauces in the hot sauce drawer or should we start over?
2. Where did all these Guitar Hero controllers come from?
3. I've seen an "Everyone wants the revolution but nobody wants to do the dishes" poster at punk houses all over while on tour. Why is this true? Where can I get said poster?
4. Why do random computer towers seem to multiply when left in a garage?
5. Whose socks are these?

Chris Mason
1. Sex Stains, Self-titled LP
2. Big Eyes, *Stake My Claim* LP
3. Run the Jewels, *3* LP
4. Mia Loucks, *Sister Honey Demos* LP
5. A Tribe Called Quest, *We Got It From Here...Thank You for Your Service* LP

Craven Rock
1. Women's March on Washington and solidarity actions around the world (Honorable Mention: J20)
2. Visiting Berlin
3. Seeing Bosch and Goya paintings at Prado, Madrid, Spain
4. Tie: Los Angelos Detraktos, Les Fils Burroughs, Dead Licks at La Comedia (best bar ever!) in Paris vs. Stage Bottles, Vostok, Tension at Gruta 77, Madrid
5. Eric King's statement after getting ten years for Ferguson solidarity action

Cynthia Pinedo
Five Things to Have with You at a Show Once You Hit Your 30s, Part 1
1. Cash to buy merch and support touring bands. Not every venue has guaranteed wifi for a card reader. Some bands don't even have card readers and keep it old school with flip phones.
2. A reusable water bottle. You may get parched while singing/screaming along to your favorite bands, or being a wallflower. Can also be used to rehydrate after an intense jaunt around the pit.
3. Earplugs to protect yourself if you don't already have tinnitus from years of loud punk/hardcore shows, or preventing it from getting worse if you do.
4. Insoles for your Vans/Converse/Dr. Martins/New Balance/Saucony/whatever shoes. Your feet will thank you, especially after a music festival.
5. A good stretching routine. You *will* feel everything in the morning.

Daisy Noemi
• The Wake, *Here Comes Everybody*
• The Field Mice, *Snowball*
• Orange Juice, *Rip It Up*
• Having crushes on all my zine friends
• That it's actually raining in L.A. (somewhat)

Daryl Gussin
• Career Suicide, *Machine Response* LP
• Mia Loucks, *Sister Honey Demos* LP
• The Globs, *Do You Feel Weird?* CS
• Mark Cone, Kid Chrome, and SBF, live at Cobraside
• Rough Kids, live at Save The Music In Chinatown 11

Eden Kittiver
Top 5 Songs for Your "House Cleaning" Playlist
1. PUP, "Familiar Patterns"
2. Squarecrow, "Right On"
3. Great Apes, "Brown Dots"
4. Dear Landlord, "I Live in Hell"
5. T.V. Microwave, "Mispronounced"

George Lopez
• Acrylics, *Despair* 7"
• Young Guv & The Scuzz, *A Love Too Strong* 12"
• Razorcake <3s Drinkin' Beer & Listenin' to Records February edition: with DJs Jade One Hitter, Meztli Hernandez, Dumbag Daryl spinnin' some mad rekkids!
• The Rantouls, *In the Village of Rantoul*
• Finally getting to watch *The Day My Kid Went Punk*. Spazz!

Griffin Wynne
• The Spook School, *Try to Be Hopeful* LP (Came with a handwritten note that said "You Wynne some, you loose some!")
• Kyra Gross's, *I Love Jesus and I Know Where My Clitoris Is* zine and T-shirt
• Parasol, *Not There* LP
• That Dog, *Retreat from the Sun* CD
• Neutral Shirt, *2016* digital album

Jennifer Federico
Top 5 Songs for Staying Angry
• Endeavor, "Semantics"
• Minor Threat, "I'm Seeing Red"
• Subhumans, "It's Gonna Get Worse"
• TSOL, "Abolish Government" / "Silent Majority"
• F.U.'s, "Civil Defense"

Jessee Xeroxed
Top 5 Skateboard Related Shows I Totally Dig
• *B.S. with T.G* on YouTube
• *Epicaly Later'd!* on YouTube
• *Jeff Grosso's Love Letters to Skateboarding* on YouTube
• *Abandoned with Rick McCrank* on Viceland
• *The Weekend Buzz*, Ride Channel on YouTube

Jimmy Alvarado
• La Tuya preparing for its next onslaught
• Corrupted Youth, *Class Struggle* LP
• Color TV, Self-titled 7" EP
• Low Culture, *Places to Hide* LP
• *A Cellar Full of Motown Vol. 1* comp CD

John Miskelly
Top Five Weirdest Things We've Somehow Found Ourselves on the Same Side as That Show Just How Fucked Up Things Are Right Now
1. The CIA
2. Mainstream news media
3. Alec Baldwin
4. Kelloggs
5. Certain members of the Rockettes

Spring Cleaning Punk House Mysteries

Juan Espinosa

• Nosferatu, *Hardcore Sounds* 7"
• Deny The Cross, *Alpha Ghoul* LP
• Mellow Harsher / Internal Rot, Split 7"
• Sepultura, *The Roadrunner Years* 6 x LP
• Return to podcasting!

Kayla Greet

1. Murder City Devils and Constant Lovers at The Crocodile, Seattle
2. Lemuria, Cayetana, Mikey Erg! at The Sunset Tavern, Seattle
3. Turning thirty-two in L.A. with RZC buds and Marriage Material / Field trip to the Banning Pinball Museum with Todd and Jennifer
4. Run The Jewels, *3*
5. Basement, *Promise Everything*

Kevin Dunn

1. Descendents, *Hypercaffium Spazzinate*
2. *NOFX: The Hepatitis Bathtub* (book)
3. Wonk Unit, *Mr. Splashy*
4. Boilerman, *Feel Ways About Stuff*
5. Bong Mountain, *You're Doing Great*

Kurt Morris

1. Black Flag, *My War*
2. Black Flag, *1982 Demos*
3. The Tragically Hip, *Yer Favourites*
4. Sufjan Stevens, *Carrie & Lowell*
5. Johnny Thunders & The Heartbreakers, *L.A.M.F*

Mark Twistworthy

• Open City, Self-titled LP
• Lê Almeida, *Todas as Brisas* LP
• Uranium Club, *All of Them Naturals* LP
• Mothercountry Motherfuckers, *Confidential Human Source* LP
• Meatbodies, *Alice* LP

Marty Ploy

• Wonk Unit, *Mr. Splashy*
• Odd Robot, *A Late Night Panic*
• Future Virgins, *Dirty Smiles 7" Anthology* LP
• Allison Crutchfield, *Tourist in This Town*
• Kira Jari, Self-titled

Matt Average

• Amarok, live at the Handbag Factory, and new recordings
• Denizenz, Self-titled LP
• Electric Wizard, anything
• Sun Ra, anything
• Os Brazoes, Self-titled LP

Megan Razzetti

• Dave Hause & The Mermaid record release show at The Redwood, 02/02/17
• Beach Slang, *A Loud Bash of Teenage Feelings*
• Lemuria, Mikey Erg!, and Cayetana at The Echo, 01/27/17
• Blasting Dead Bars on the way to class every morning
• Vegan donuts

Michael Fournier

• Trophy Wife, Governess, Patsy Decline at St. Stephen's Church, Washington, DC 02/11/17
• *Fluke Fanzine* #14
• Negative Scanner, Self-titled LP
• Pure Disgust, Self-titled LP
• Eileen Myles, *I Must Be Living Twice: New and Selected Poems 1975-2014*

Mike Dumps

1. Bash & Pop, *Anything Could Happen*
2. Ryan Adams, *Prisoner*
3. Color TV, Self-titled 7"
4. City Of Caterpillar, Self-titled reissue
5. Kendrick Lamar, *To Pimp a Butterfly*

Mike Faloon

1. Ergs!, *Goddamn Death Song Dedication* 7" EP
2. ESP Ohio, *Starting Point of the Royal Cyclopean* LP
3. Alejandro Escovedo, *Burn Something Beautiful* LP
4. Mary Halvorson, *Away with You* CD
5. Lisa Mezzacappa, *avantNOIR* CD

Mike Frame

1. Jeff Dahl, *Made in Hawaii* CD
2. Cody Jinks, *I'm Not the Devil* CD
3. Alejandro Escovedo, *Burn Something Beautiful* CD
4. Chelle Rose, *Blue Ridge Blood* CD
5. *Art of War* and *1984*, (audio books)

Nighthawk

• Bust! at Ian's Party
• The Brokedowns, *Life Is a Breeze* CD
• Finding a $100 bill on the ground
• Wearing a different shirt every day this year
• *Doogie Howser, M.D.*

Paul Comeau

Five Books to Get You Through the Next Four Years
1. *The Dispossessed*, Ursula K. LeGuin
2. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire
3. *The Radical Reader*, Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John McMillian eds.
4. *Living My Life*, Emma Goldman (two vols.)
5. *No Gods, No Masters*, Daniel Guerin

Paul Silver

1. Odd Robot, *A Late Night Panic* LP
2. *Why Are We Doing This in Front of People* documentary film about Octagrape's fateful East Coast tour
3. La Escalera New Year's Eve at Tower Bar, San Diego, with Caskitt, Western Settings, DFMK, Gentlemen Prefer Blood, Rebels & Traitors, Ninja Night Race, and New Way On
4. Half Man, Sam Howden, Buckley's Angel, The Last Minute, and Cameron Royce at The Che Café, San Diego
5. Getting involved in the Courageous Resistance campaign to resist Trump's agenda

Rev Nørb

• Cheap Cassettes, *All Anxious, All the Time* CD
• Peripherique Est, *Ring Est* 12" 45
• Moondogs, *When Sixteen Wasn't So Sweet* 12" 45
• The Connection, *Just for Fun* CD
• Durien Brothers / Ensemble Skalectrik, Split 12" 45

Richard Cocksedge

• Super Unison, *Auto* LP
• Nerve Quakes, *A New State* LP
• Marcel Duchamp, *La Vida De Las Personas* LP
• Liquids, *Hot Liqs* LP
• Idiota Civilizzato, *La Vita Silenziosa* 7"

Rosie Gonce

Top 5 Songs on My Playlist Now
1. "Can You Deal?" Bleached, single
2. "Vacant" Decent Criminal, Self-titled LP
3. "Death" Decent Criminal, Self-titled LP
4. "Yin-Yang Smile" Vacation, *Non-Person* LP
5. "All in a Day's Lurk" The Bombpops, *Fear of Missing Out* LP

Ryan Nichols

1. Hostage Records
2. Mad Parade, *Real Horror Show (1983-1983 Demos)* LP
3. VHS, *Gift of Life* LP
4. T.S.O.L., *Trigger Complex* LP
5. Celluloid, *Death Rides West*

Sal Lucci

Money Has Been Tight Lately, So I've Been in the Used Bins More Often Than Not
1. *Sooprize Package* (garage/ budget rock zine, c.1995)
2. Spastics 7" (Rip Off Records, 1996)
3. Fells, *"Fun Date" b/w "Easy Rider"* 7" (c. 1992)
4. *Cosmic Dancer: The Life and Music of Marc Bolan*, book (2012)
5. John Wesley Coleman, *Microwave Dreams* LP (I did buy something new recently!)

Sean Arenas

Recommended Reading for Horror Movie Buffs
• *Dark Carnival: The Secret World of Tod Browning* by David J. Skal
• *Vampira: Dark Goddess of Horror* by W. Scott Poole
• *Nightmare USA: The Untold Story of the Exploitation Independents* by Stephen Thrower
• *Profondo Argento: The Man, the Myths & the Magic* by Alan Jones
• *Hybrid Moments: A Literary Tribute to the Misfits* edited by Sam Richard and MP Johnson

Sean Koepenick

New Books I Want to Read
1. *The Prodigal Rogerson* by J. Hunter Bennett
2. *Lonely Boy* by Steve Jones
3. *Cured* by Lol Tolhurst
4. *I Survived D.O.A.* by Randy Rampage
5. *My Damage: The Story of a Punk Rock Survivor* by Keith Morris and Jim Ruland

Simone Carter

Top 5 Singles of 2017 (So Far)
• "Thorns" by Pallbearer
• "Texas" by Pile
• "Deny" by King Woman
• "Executioner's Tax (Swing of the Axe)" by Power Trip
• "Ignorecam" by Pissed Jeans

Theresa W.

1. Deadaires, "Boom Boom"
2. Helms Alee, "Galloping Mind Fuk"
3. Craig Werden, "I Am a Wolf"
4. Wild Powwers, "Wet 'n' Wild"
5. Twelve Hour Turn, "No Tomorrow"

Toby Tober

Top 5 Movies I Have Recently Enjoyed
1. *Tickled*
2. *A Fat Wreck*
3. *A Man Called Ove*
4. *Riot on the Dance Floor*
5. *The Edge of Seventeen*

Todd Taylor

• Wreck Of The Zephyr, *After Myths of Youth* LP
• Uranium Club, *All of Them Naturals* LP
• Lysol, *Wired* 7"
• Drakulas, *Raw Wave* LP
• *Streetopia* (book) and *Scam* #10 (zine), both edited by Erick Lyle
• Unreleased, unmastered Worriers tracks

RECORD REVIEWS

They could have called the record *Songs to Punch Your Dad to.*

–Kelley O'Death
T-TOPS, *Face of Depression* 7"

ACCIDENTE: *Pulso:* LP
Madrid, Spain's Accidente have unearthed that long-lost Hopeless (when the bands were great) and Go Kart pop punk sound and given it brand new and meaningful life. Imagine a punchier Lemuria that's been binge listening to Lifetime or even a tighter-sounding, faster Earth Girls. What a pleasant fucking surprise. This one won't be making its way to the buy counter at Amoeba. –Juan Espinosa (Vox Populi / No Friends / Ecabrupto / Inhumano / Chaos Rural / Dirt Cult)

ACRYLICS: Self-titled: 12" EP
Freak-out punk, with flanged guitars and a bit of psychedelia tingeing the edges amidst the dissonance. They're effective, delivering all the right kinds of annoying, and their interest in avoiding the same ol' same ol' is refreshing. –Jimmy Alvarado (Neck Chop, facebook.com/NeckChopRecords)

AH FUCK: *Alone in a Cusp:* CS
Whoa. Can you get any lower-fi than the lowest lo-fi? One man ventured to find out for himself. Ah Fuck is the preferred pseudonym for a truly singular individual (né: ???) from Los Angeles. Upon first listen, *Alone in a Cusp* is a pretty unremarkable EP. Its seven songs are skeletal in their instrumentation, sporadically sprinkled with a spattering of lyrics, and hooks are hard to come by. The songman could instead be called a sound sculptor; between songs, Ah Fuck specializes in shaping mountainous piles of reverb, street sounds, and sound bites. Somehow this EP reminds me of the soundtrack to the Fugazi documentary, *Instrument*—heavy on the experimentation and light on structure. Though the vocals are spider web-thin and the guitar melody often gets lost in the wake of its own reverb, there's something—a certain *je ne sais quoi*—about *Alone in a Cusp* that I really, really dig. Think I'll go back for seconds. –Simone Carter (Self-released, ahfuck.bandcamp.com)

ALAN SIX: *Illuminachos:* CD
Seven songs of lo-fi pop punk from this band from Las Vegas. Coming across a lot like a band that might have been the opener on a bill with Tilt or Discount twenty years ago, Alan Six are solid at the style. Not nearly as good as, say, The Front or the F Bombers, but if you are a fan of mid-tempo pop punk with a rough and ragged edge, this gets the job done. –Mike Frame (Self-released, alansix.bandcamp.com)

ANCHORD: *As a Real Return:* LP/CD
The opening track, ingeniously entitled "Intro," provides two minutes of simple instrumental indie rock, which I find hypnotic and could listen to on repeat for quite some time. What follows does manage to grip me, however, with an occasionally angular yet wholly indie/punk theme prevailing. This is one of those albums which have snuck up on me. Over the course of half a dozen listens, it has attached itself to the inside of my head like a barnacle on a ship's hull. I feel warmth emanating from the songs, much in the way I do when listening to Samiam, and that is an entirely pleasing sensation. Another fine Spanish band comes to the fore on this excellent label. –Rich Cocksedge (Bcore Disc)

ANGRY GODS: *The Clearing:* LP
Dissonant and, well, angry noise rock that is flat-out withering from go. These fuckers are seriously pissed off and taking it out on both the listener and their instruments. The soundtrack to your next appendectomy, sans anesthesia. –Jimmy Alvarado (Hip Kid)

¡APARATO!: *Huastech 3000:* CD
¡Aparato! makes post-punk Chicanx futurism for people who want to change the world. Blending indie electronic elements with classic influences like Son Jarocho and the Ramones, they craft beautiful songs of celebration and protest with co-ed vocals, synthesizers, jaranas, and electric guitars. These seven songs are mellower than their debut, but cover a lot of musical ground, ranging from sweet '90s pop R&B songs written from Chicanx punk perspective like "Arullame," to "Machine," a poetic song about the dreams of migrants set to fast-moving experimental electro rock, to "Crooked Smile," which boasts New Order vibes. ¡Aparato! is growing into who they want to be and staying true to their DIY roots. It's no surprise they've received critical acclaim despite their lack of label support. –Candace Hansen (Self-released, aparatomusic.com)

AQUARIAN BLOOD: *Warlock Cock:* 7"
Memphis noise mongers deliver two blasts of dissonant, artsy minimalist punk with shades of psychedelia peppered throughout. Songs are brief but potent. –Jimmy Alvarado (Pelican Pow Wow, pelicanpowwow.com)

ATOWN SLUTS:
***I Hate the Atown Sluts:* CD**
A lot of times Razorcake tries to pick out things that I'll enjoy or at least not hate when I get it for review. But the fact of the matter is that everything has to go somewhere and sometimes I get things that I'm not crazy about. I try really hard not to judge a record before I hear it, but I am instantly turned off when you put the words "slut," "whore," or "bitch" in your band name. The cover art is them biting KISS's *Destroyer*, with a Billboard Hot List as their tracks on the back. Some of these low brow titles include "Let It Rot," "I Like the Blood," and "Pass Me the Needle." This is shock rock about drugs and sex, and they couldn't even make it interesting. If you're going to cover such lewd or unimaginative topics, at least play with your words a little. Throw in a mixed metaphor or an artsy allegory. Or even just play music that is so good; you forget about the trite lyrics that come with it. A spoon full of sugar is definitely needed to get their medicine to go down for me. If you like GG Allin, I'm guessing that you might find this up your alley—next to the dumpster you just set on fire. –Kayla Greet (Self-released)

AUTOPSIES, THE:
***A Memoir from the Morgue:* 7"**
I don't think I have ever listened to a psychobilly record before. It seems like it could soundtrack a haunted playground, demonic circus, or something: high-tension delayed guitar, freaky but somehow old-timey melodies. There's also a surf element to it. But maybe that's just the Autopsies. Either way, it's surprisingly listenable, probably more so if you're into this kind of thing. –Lyle (Killjoy)

BAD FUTURE: *No Permission:* CS
I know it may seem like I am a one-man cheer squad at Razorcake for Seattle's Bad Future, but I can't help how damn good they are (and for the record, Jim Ruland and I make up a two-man cheer squad for them!). Well, they're at it again with a self-released cassette that once again shows the quick rate at which the band's sound is evolving and how they continue to master what ever approach they take. The quirkiness that permeated their debut release, *Golden Age,* has drifted a long way off to the back burner, showcasing a bludgeoning yet intricate style of hardcore that falls more in line with their latest LP. Angry, yet optimistic. Intricate, yet on the verge of falling apart. Bad Future takes me in two different directions at the same time and I can't get enough. Easily one of the best bands out there right now! –Ty Stranglehold (Self-released, badfuture.bandcamp.com)

BARE MINIMUM, THE:
***Sink to the Top:* CD**
The Bare Minimum has me questioning the stereotype that all Canadians are painfully nice. I mean I bet the dudes in the band are perfectly sweet, but if *Sink to the Top* is any indication, they've got a bunch of rage boiling beneath the surface. I keep thinking they sound a lot like The Offspring, but then they'll slap on a sweet thrash metal riff or growl just to throw me off the scent. Regardless, at a time when most punk bands are copies of copies, The Bare Minimum manages to keep their music interesting and their skills honed. –Simone Carter (Self-released, thebareminimum.ca)

BEASTEATER: Self-titled: LP
Whoa! Beasteater is a melding of Detroit and Buffalo garage rock greats, bringing together folks who've previously done time in such bands as The Dirtbombs, Bantam Rooster, The Dirtys, and The Blowtops, among others. Musically, they offer noisy, fuzzed-out garage punk that is sometimes riffy, sometimes driven, and sometimes more dirgey, but it's always good. Honestly, the record is much noisier than I was expecting based on the lineage of the members, something that was a total welcomed surprise. This isn't your parents' garage rock, but instead the type that will hit you over the head, steal your rent money, and blow it all at the bar with no regrets whatsoever. –Mark Twistworthy (Big Neck, bigneckrecords.com)

BELL WIRE: *Dog Thoughts:* CD
From jump, I thought this was going to be a record of Patti Smith-like spoken word and that was a little scary to me. I'm guessing the EP title and first song are actually just thoughts that a dog might have with some guitars and drums softly laid over top. My next

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concern was that this band was going for an art rock band identity with songs that are just weird for the sake of being weird. But then the second track comes on and proves to be the standout for me. The three after that followed suit as well, but I think the hard left turn they took is much easier to appreciate the first time it happened. They flirt with indie rock while wearing a leather jacket—a lot like Dinosaur Jr., and very much a band you'd find in college. –Kayla Greet (Spark & Fizz)

BESSERBITCH: *Pretenders & Liars:* CD
Stockholm femme band Besserbitch are straight adolescent pop punk mall rock that's so slick and polished it has no edge. Highly produced to the point where it sounds like there's auto tune and a drum machine, and it's just not right. –Camylle Reynolds (Bolero)

BETA BOYS: *After Dark:* 7" EP
Blown-out, distorted punk/hardcore—Disorder as interpreted by Groinoids, maybe? Shit's fucked up, and gloriously so, either way. Play loud enough your ears bleed, then crank the knob just a wee bit higher. –Jimmy Alvarado (Neck Chop, facebook.com/NeckChopRecords)

BIKINI BEACH: *Guzzler:* CD
Germany may not be the first place that comes to mind when you think of a bikini beach, but Wavves and Ty Segall-influenced band Bikini Beach calls it home. Lo-fi, garagey surf punk is my cup of tea, and *Guzzler* served it. The album cover gave me a hard time figuring out what the band was called, because half of the name is cut off by a child's head, but all the Googling to figure it out was rewarded by a cute DIY spray painted CD. Alternating male and female vocals kept me interested, and the vocals on "My Way" are reminiscent of Be Your Own Pet crossed with Mika Miko. What starts out as a high-powered day at the beach ends in the slow haze of "Exit," the closing song. It's a nice fadeout, and I know I'll be listening to this album a lot this season, dreaming of weather warm enough to go to the beach. –Cynthia Pinedo (Bikini Beach, bikinibeach.bandcamp.com)

BLEEDERS: *Gash:* CS
Holy hell, this is good. Definite feminist, no wave energy—which we need more than ever right now—plus raw, noisy, structured post-punk energy, which is also needed. I'd like to direct everyone to the songs "Mansplainer" and "Forced Vaginal Ultrasound" in particular. Book this band at your show and add tape to cart. –Matt Werts (What's For Breakfast, wfbrecords.com)

BOATS: *Black and White:* LP
Been a good minute since I last saw a release from Modern Action (the label), and it's great to see they haven't thrown in the towel just yet. Boats are well suited to the label's sound, falling somewhere between the Briefs and Modern Action (the band), showcasing brief, catchy bits of thud-punk with sonic roots pulled deep from West Coast—especially Southern California—punk's first wave DNA. Shit's bouncy, anthemic, and sure to get the party started. –Jimmy Alvarado (Modern Action)

BONES: *The Ghost of Electricity:* CS
Some fairly basic Panda Bear vibes on this cassette: tenor voice, layered acoustic and electronic sounds, unorthodox percussion. There may be a King Crimson record on this dude's shelf, too. The production and arrangements are interesting, though the lyrics are a little "Philosophy 101 Bro" for me. I'm not a full-on hippie (I'm at like twenty to thirty percent), but I think even if I was, I'd have some issues with this one. –Matt Werts (Spark & Fizz, sparkandfizz.com)

BOOJI BOYS: Self-titled: LP
Drunken Sailor puts out another killer record! This time it is Nova Scotia, Canada's own Booji Boys. Super catchy fuzz punk is on the menu, and the servings are huge! Elise and I were rocking out to this the other day. She wished the vocals we a little less fuzzed-out, but it works for me. Musically, it is a relentless freakout. At times, I hear a little bit of Hakan (another amazing Drunken Sailor band) in there, but maybe if they decided to get fucked up in the desert with Lenguas Largas and Bad Sports. A sloppy good time! I have never been to the Maritimes part of my country, and Booji Boys are another reason that I should get out there. –Ty Stranglehold (Drunken Sailor)

BRAINZ, THE: Self-titled: 7"
Those versed in Mighty Sphincter's wild, disjointed, prog rock-influenced piss take on goth will find much here that rings familiar, and with good reason: this is the band that spawned 'em, with three-fifths of this band later figuring prominently in Mighty Sphincter's lineup. The two tunes here are a bit more "punk" than later efforts, but the same chaotic, complex, and dense structures are also very much in evidence, feeling at times more jazz-influenced than the comparatively straightforward sensibilities of contemporaries like the Consumers, for example. So far as I know, this 1979 single remains the only recorded documentation of the band thus far released, and I'm sure this reissue of it is limited, so those with more adventurous tastes are well warned to pick it up right quick. –Jimmy Alvarado (Slope, sloperecords.com)

BRIEFS, THE: *Odd Numbers:* CD
A collection of largely non-canon odds and ends by this now-legendary band. Tunes are culled from a variety of sources, many of them alternate takes of tunes found on official albums, live tracks, demos, and so on. Sound quality throughout is damned good—don't think I've ever heard anything from 'em that sounded like shit, come to think of it—though the way the tracks are broken up are sometimes a bit off,

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Abolitionist "The Growing Disconnect": LP//12"

so ends and beginnings get clipped from one tune to the next. Fans will dig it and newbies will get the gist. –Jimmy Alvarado (Modern Action)

BRUISER QUEEN: *"Telepathic Mind" b/w "Rainbow in the Dark": 7"*
Two tracks of riffy, garage-inspired powerpop. Not quite Burger Records territory, but it's surfy and scrappy just the same. I try to avoid calling vocals "sultry," but that's kind of what the frontwoman has going on here. The B-side is actually doing a lot more for me with its moodier '80s pop rock vibe, sort of a Pat Benatar thing. Or maybe I'm thinking of Heart? On the other hand, "Telepathic Mind" does have some neat organ work, which is always a plus for me. –Indiana Laub (Certified PR, certifiedprrecords.com)

CADAVERS: *Death & Taxes:* CD
I imagine the pit at a Cadavers show to be really intense and full of people screaming the earnest lyrics back to the band. This album is almost twenty-five minutes of well-produced, dark anarcho hardcore punk from the U.K. Concepts covered on *Death & Taxes* range from the dark side of consumerism on "Fashion Kills," war and politics in "Cold World," and corrupt government in the title track "Death & Taxes." Several of the songs focus on the crushing impact of a crooked society focused on being overworked to the bone and raging on the weekend, guns and mass shootings, and being brainwashed into thinking that all of this is normal. As the tracks get further into the album, the lyrics start to get more personal and raw, transitioning from cause to effect, the paranoia, self-doubt, and self-deprecation that come from a life centralized on destruction, being told what to do, and not being in control of it. The final track, "In Crowding," is an ode to that one person who is always ahead of the trend, but thinks it sets them apart from everyone else. Softer vocals and chorus of, "You're so cool, I don't wanna be like you," assure the listener that even though life can suck, it's fun to yell about how messed up everything is and not want to be like the cool kids. –Cynthia Pinedo (Cadavers, cadaversuk.bandcamp.com)

CAPSOULS, THE: *Your Sweet Inspiration: 7"*
The title track is a cover of the Pioneers' rocksteady cover of "I Need Your Sweet Inspiration," a 1968 soul hit for the Sweet Inspirations. The flip is a cover of Frankie Beverly's Northern Soul staple, "If That's What You Wanted." These Bakersfield kids nail the sound on both sides, turning in respectable covers that sonically fit the eras of the respective eras. Nice work, and if these two tracks are any indication, I'm guessing they can rock the fuck outta a club. –Jimmy Alvarado (Obeah)

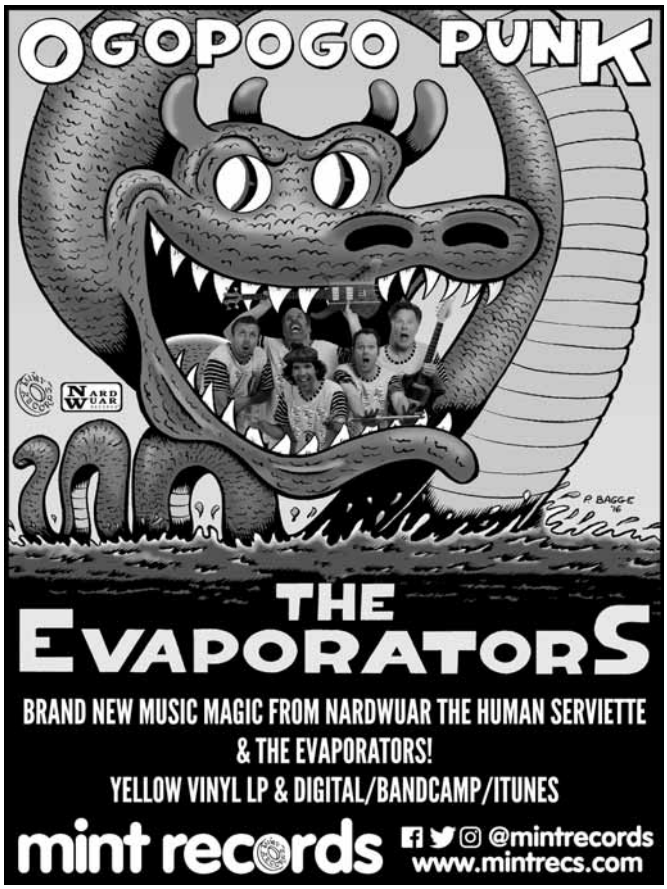
CAREER SUICIDE: *Machine Response:* LP
All these years later, they're still cranking out that '80s hardcore sound that may actually sound better than anything that came out in the '80s. For those who like their punk fast and catchy, Career Suicide is as reliable as they come and *Machine Response* does not disappoint. Ten years after they perfected the sound on *Attempted Suicide*, they've turned it into something of their own. With many of their Y2K contemporaries gone, they are free to rule as they wish. They've incorporated a few melodic flourishes to the vocals, some crunchy as fuck noise parts, and even decided to slow down (*just a tad*) where it seems fit. If you've been waiting for it, you're gonna be stoked. If you have no idea who this band is, you're gonna be stoked. Simply the best. –Daryl (Deranged)

CELLULOID: *Death Rides West:* CS
This record starts out with a slow, six-minute, bleary-eyed, road-worn song called "Roadside Prey" that has a fingernails on the chalkboard kind of feeling that bands like the Scientists and the Birthday Party did well. From there, the rest of the songs just rip the chalkboard apart in a fury of frustration and nerves. It's nice to hear creepy, moody, post-punk played this fast and with such an I-don't-give-a-fuck attitude. Fans of The Icarus Line, Nick Cave, or Murder City Devils should check out this band. –Ryan Nichols (Casino Trash)

CHEMICALS: *D.A.G.R.I.P.:* LP
Start with a Tim Kerr painting cover. Follow up with credits peppered with heavy familiarity (Steve Turner, Tim Kerr again, Buzz or Howl Studio). If you're Chemicals, you've set yourself up with a lot to live up to. Luckily, you've gathered an Oregonian "supergroup" of vetted local members to deliver a disaster/masterpiece of garage-born trash rock. From flick of a switchblade quick tracks to rockin' Kerr-blown harmonica stompers, Chemicals provide a perfect sonic pallet of spilt beer, dirty dance floor rock'n'roll. Highly recommended. –Matt Seward (Jonny Cat)

CHILDSPLAY: *Generation Automation:* CD
Vancouver, BC's Childplay step up to the plate on the follow-up to their *Righteous Rampage* CD-R. These guys do the street punk thing, not doing much to escape the tag. A couple of tracks have the by now familiar "chinka chink" of Rancid-ska—which I could always do without—but all that said, this is a definite progression from the above-mentioned CD-R. –Garrett Barnwell (Self-released, childsplaylive.com)

CIRCLE PIT: *Society Burns:* EP
Exactly, and I mean *exactly*, what you would expect from a band called Circle Pit. Straight-forward political hardcore from Austin, TX that is tailor-made for crowd-walking and picking up change. Not intensely original, but also not mind-numbingly derivative. A little one note. And, as you can tell from titles like "Lost My Shit in the Pit," "Get the Fuck in the Pit," "Stuck



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in a Mosh Pit," and "Circle Pit," that note is the fucking pit. Bonus points for the robot Trump on the sleeve—I bet a Circle Pit show is a great place to get out some misplaced aggression that's pent up during the first hundred days. –Theresa W. (Self-released)

CLOSET BURNER:
Disappointment. Death. Dishonor.: **LP**
Closet Burner are the queer anarchist hardcore humans my teen crustie Aus-Rotten-loving heart has been waiting for. I love everything about this release: the hand screened insert boasting the adage "up the queers—smash the state—hate the cops," the legible lyric sheet with simply conveyed political anthems, the songs that move between dark, fast punk, sludgy bangers, and heavy breakdowns. Come for the (presumably vegan) leather harness art, stay for everything else. –Candace Hansen (Reality Is A Cult / IFB / Get Better)

COLOR TV: Self-titled: 7"
I have to say that I never would have thought that I would be glad that I didn't get a Stops 7" that I had ordered, but the end result was that I got to find out about Color TV. Thanks to Gord at Deranged for suggesting the substitute. This band is from Minnesota and encapsulated a lot of what I love about music these days. I hear a lot of influences in there that make me think that I may have a similar record collection to the members of the band. I could list of a bunch of bands, but the first thing that came to mind was that Color TV sounds like what I imagine a collaboration between Steve Adamyk and Daniel Fried would sound like. While I wait patiently for that to happen, I am more than happy to get down with Color TV… I will also go about tracking that Stops 7" down too! –Ty Stranglehold (Deranged)

CONAN NEUTRON & THE SECRET FRIENDS: ***The Art of Murder:*** **CD/LP**
I start all reviews of Conan Neutron's bands (Replicator, Mount Vicious, Victory & Associates, and now Conan Neutron & The Secret Friends) with the same caveat: I've known Conan since about 2001. That being said, it's good to see his musical progression. That's not to say his past projects were bad, but it seems that *The Art of Murder* is his strongest yet. The music has muscle, with tough guitars and solid drumming, courtesy of Dale Crover of the Melvins. There are hooks aplenty on most of the songs, the kind that will have you repeating the refrain in your head the rest of the day, even if you don't know what the hell they mean. My one complaint is that on occasion those refrains could last too long at the end of the songs, which means that these eleven songs could've been shorter than the album's thirty-eight minutes. Making the songs a bit shorter would've added to their punch instead of feeling that they were occasionally dragging. The most surprising aspect of *The Art of Murder* were the melodies, which isn't something I recall Neutron playing around with so much in the past. It gives the tracks more depth and shows that the band can hit hard as well as pull back. That diversity within the sound (punk, indie rock, rock'n'roll, whatever you want to call it) that Conan Neutron fills, makes for a strong album. –Kurt Morris (Seismic Wave, neutronfriends.bandcamp.com)

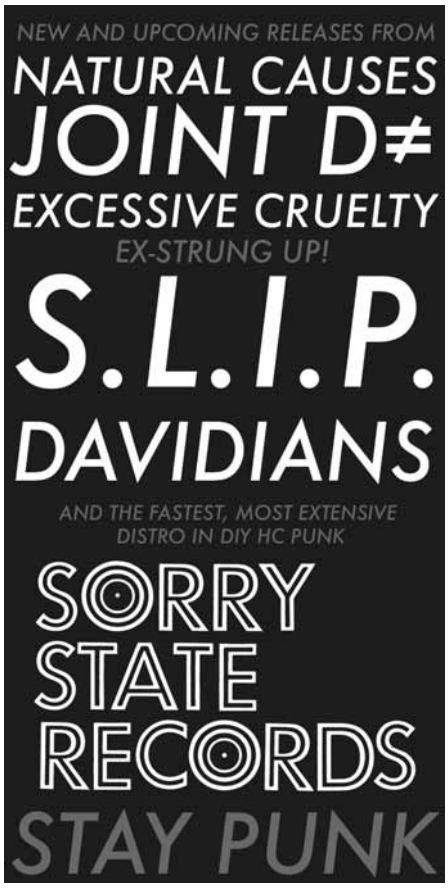
CORRUPTED YOUTH: ***Class Struggle:*** **LP**
Rock solid dose of East Los-styled hardcore with a deep UK82 influence, especially prime Exploited without the crappy lyrics. The songs are kept in high gear, the bilingually delivered subject matter is topical and enlightened, and the whole package retains a righteous anger throughout. These cats are the big dogs of the "street punk" wing of the Eastside scene, and given the consistent quality and drive evinced here, it's clear why. Backslaps all around, 'cause you nailed this, boyos. –Jimmy Alvarado (Evacuate)

CRAVATS, THE: ***Blurred:*** **7"**
There once was a time, like most punk at one point, when anarcho punk bands didn't follow a prescribed template. (Oddly enough, one of the worst offenders of insisting on a set sound, at least with regards to their label, were Crass, which I've always thought an odd position for a buncha anarchists to take, but I digress.) There were bands that were sonically and stylistically all over the map. The Cravats were one with a singular sound: decidedly "punk" but crammed with all sorts of oddness, from art rock to jazz to skronk and so on, delivered with a kind of tension that bands like Talking Heads could only daydream about. The two tracks on this latest are very much along the same lines they've always worked under, maybe a wee bit less tense, but just as blissfully odd and singular as ever. –Jimmy Alvarado (Overground)

CRUZ RADICAL: Self-titled: LP
I've never heard of Cruz Radical but now they are on my radar. Cruz Radical is a San Diego band that dishes up some bilingual punk, in both Spanish and English. It's a modern take on the Zeros with that straightforward Chula Vista sound and Adolescents-style bass lines, but also in the vein of SoCal contemporaries Generacion Suicida. It's clean, upbeat, no-frills punk and I'm into it. –Camylle Reynolds (Sex Sheet)

CUSHING: ***Curse of Cushing:*** **CD**
Wow, color me impressed! This CD comes across like some unholy union between Mogwai, early-period Failure, and classic Jesus Lizard. Production is top notch and the sound is dense, with shards of noise and feedback tucked into every corner. This disc really reminds me of East Coast practice spaces in the winter where you never stop seeing your breath and the only source of heat is coming from the amps. –Garrett Barnwell (Self-released)

CUT UPS, THE: ***Nerves:*** **LP/CD**
The Cut Ups might well be England's politest punk band. This outfit doesn't



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scream and shout, nor do they have a tumultuous musical outpouring. No, these Devonians favor a more considered and rational delivery played out over a mid-tempo, melodic accompaniment. The secret of this band's success is in taking on its targets in a positive and measured way, but without losing any impact in terms of getting messages across. I recently saw lead vocalist/guitarist Jon Curtis play two of the songs off this record on his own and I was dumbstruck by how moving they were. With the full band in play, those songs have an even bigger presence, none more so than "Thomas Orchard Is No Longer Around," the story of a young man who died after being taken into police custody. Remarkably, the song has an uplifting and optimistic feel to it. For me, this is the key to why I enjoy this band so much. –Rich Cocksedge (Banquet)

D L BURDON: *Accidental Aesop:* LP/CD
Up to now, D L (Davey Lee) Burdon has been known for being part of Former Cell Mates, as well as having had a period of time in Leatherface, which should be more than enough for people to take notice of his new project. Maturity might not be a word that finds favor with some punks, but this album certainly displays how musicians progress as they advance in years. The result in this case is a grand collection of soulful songs well suited to Burdon's distinctive vocals. Musically, it's part Former Cell Mates, part Americana, and, in places, a touch of the more recent Squeeze recordings. These songs produce a warm sensation in me just like when I'm surrounded by my nearest and dearest. This is a beautiful album. –Rich Cocksedge (Boss Tuneage, bosstuneage.com)

DACIOS, THE: *Beyond the Bottom Hour:* LP
There's a sticker affixed to the shrink wrap on the Dacios' album that drops names such as Patti Smith, MC5, and Jason Spaceman. I suppose the vocalist does sound a bit like Patti and the band does like to use a lot of pedals and Orange amps, but save for the song "Horse Attacks" there really isn't much on this record that doesn't sound overly grandiose and flat. –Juan Espinosa (Homeless, homelessvinyl.com.au)

DAGGER MOON: *Citadel:* LP
There are so many categories of metal; there should be one for bands using doom riffs well. Doom is the new lazy. But Dagger Moon play above average drone with the added dimensions of a John Carpenter-inspired keyboard raising sails in the windstorm, a great bass sound, and some tasteful instrumental accoutrement. Neurosis comes to mind as a reference point. I've always found Neurosis a little above category. I enjoy Neurosis and I don't often like things like Neurosis. But I like this. So take all that into account. But if you're looking for something like this, you should get this instead. –Billups Allen (citadel666.bandcamp.com)

DANGER SIGNS: *Reset:* LP
This LP has several good examples of Carbonas-paced punk'n'roll, occasionally tinted with what I think might just be a case of playing too fast in the studio. "Automation" stands out as a zinger with the guitars landing on some nice melody lines amongst a furious pace. I can hear a full-on classic in "Three Steps Behind," but the subtlety of the riff is lost in speed a bit for my taste. The pace of the songs brings the album into the '90s pop punk arena a bit too much for me on occasion, but if you're into good rock with some '90s punk sensibilities, it's a good band with a great guitarist. –Billups Allen (Big Neck)

DANKÜS TARKÜS: *"Binky Boy" b/w "Amerika, Blood and Wires": 7"*
Three solid shakers in the mechanical, Devo arena. "Binky Boy" could be a Devo song in both sound and theme. The other two songs move at dry guitar, driving punk speeds, but stay in the Ohio Basin. So if you're into Devo or The Coneheads album, you'd appreciate this. I know it's an obvious reference, but it's good and right up your alley. I'm into it. –Billups Allen (Self-released)

DARKO: *Bonsai Mammoth:* LP/CD
This is the second release I received to review for this issue where there is a heavy reliance on technically astute musicianship to provide the core of its output. However, unlike the other album, I find myself totally in tune with what this English band is doing. Here, rather than drowning songs in what seems almost like a vain display of the musicians' ability, Darko's songs are full of flourishes that enhance my enjoyment. This is very much in the vein of fellow Brits The Human Project, where songs are energetically driven along by a desire to flex ones' fingers up and down a fretboard. The other plus is that many of the songs hit the mark early on and choruses and melodies stick with ease. *Bonsai Mammoth* is an easy album to get into. This is out on many labels, but mine came from Lockjaw. –Rich Cocksedge (Lockjaw)

DATE NIGHT WITH BRIAN: *Summertime:* 10"
Given that my father and uncle are both named Brian and it is my middle name, I convinced myself that I was destined to have an affinity to this band before I knew any more than its title. Then I discovered that one-third of one of my favourite bands, Sicko, was also one-third of DNWB. That person being Ean Hernandez, whose label is also responsible for releasing this record. I was sold from there. The bass-less trio's songs have a quirky garage pop feel, which manages to offer up hints of Sicko through some of the guitar work and Hernandez's vocals. Drummer Reba Cowen—who was in Tales From The Birdbath with Hernandez—provides main vocals on the final of the five songs, "Drink the Kool-Aid," to end on the highest of notes. My attraction is now firmly cemented. –Rich Cocksedge (Top Drawer)

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DEAD ON THE WIRE: *Lonely Hearts: 7"* EP
Neo-classic punk along the same lines of Duane Peters' assorted endeavors—mid-gear, anthemic choruses, with maybe just a wee bit of the edginess sanded off. –Jimmy Alvarado (No Front Teeth, nofrontteeth.net)

DEADAIRES: Self-titled: LP
Though their current running total of shows can probably still be counted on two hands, St. Augustine darlings Deadaires' self-titled LP shows what a band can do with the combined power and wisdom of decades of punk experience. This record feels deeply Southern in the same slow-burn way of a thick drawl. It's measured but deep, beginning with the heartbeat of the surprisingly ear-wormy post-punk "Constance Demario." Deliberate with careful builds, the sparse dynamics and sardonic wit of lines like "tell me one more time how hard you work" are made especially tight through the continually impressive mixing work of J. Robbins. Seriously, I'd listen to anything that guy touches. And with Off With Their Heads' Ryan Young attached through his label Anxious And Angry and the oft-incanted presence of Against Me!'s former bassist Andrew Seward, the lineage imprinted on this record makes it clear it's not just a one-off fluke but careful, thoughtful work from people who know the game well enough to get it right. –Theresa W. (Anxious And Angry, ryan@anxiousandangry.com, anxiousandangry.com)

DECORUM: *Near Gone || No Haven:* CS
Brooklyn experimental post-punk triumvirate, Decorum, offer up some dreamy dissonance on *Near Gone || No Haven*, a limited-edition double A side cassette and their second release of 2016. The band's reverb-laden vocals and vibrating atmospheres belie their contemporary context; these tracks would not seem out of step on a mix with your favorite proto-goth cuts from the '70s and '80s. However, Decorum are not merely interested in presenting a greatest-hits-redux of a bygone era, instead appropriating and rearranging the familiar elements into something that feels original. "Near Gone" is firmly rooted in dark wave tradition, evoking the hypnotic drone of Bauhaus, the catchy progressions of Joy Division, and even the pop-star-stuck-at-the-bottom-of-a-well genius of Robert Smith's more melancholy moments without referencing anything too specific. "No Haven" is bookended by passages that feel surprisingly ethereal—blending the band's dual vocals to achieve an achingly wistful tone—but the track's middle third plunges into the kind of dense, weighty bassline that anchors the best of the genre. Dynamic, dimensional, and otherworldly, Decorum feel transported from another time, but display too much soul and emotional heft to be written off as pure nostalgic revelry. –Kelley O'Death (Mirror Universe Tapes, mirroruniversetapes@gmail.com, mirroruniversetapes.com)

DECORUM: *Vail:* CD
The all-bass/no guitars shtick utilized to good effect by the Cure in their early days is put to good use here as well. When things work, the dark-tinged tunes recall some of the best of early Dead Can Dance and others in post-punk's first wave that figured prominently in the development of what became known as goth. Problem is too often the songs are more style than potent substance, showing up with little to hold on to or remember once they've moved on—some good ideas floating around that are ultimately lost in execution. A little work on stronger hooks, though, and I'm betting these cats will hit "top" lists in short order. –Jimmy Alvarado (Decorum)

DEFORESTERS: *Leonard:* LP/CD
After two excellent EPs, Deforesters' ability to conjure up a blend of Face To Face and Pegboy finally finds its way on to a long player. It is one hell of a record. Both of those EPs were flawless and four of the eight tracks have found their way onto *Leonard*, although my personal favorite was not included. I'll let the band off, though. The quartet are more than adept at offering up really catchy melodic punk rock that invigorates me and does so from start to finish here. I wouldn't tag the band as being overtly humorous, but with a song title like "The Topiary Animals Are Telling Me to Do Terrible Things," it shows a tongue-in-cheek approach is within Deforesters' arsenal. That doesn't detract from a serious side, as is found on "Is This a God Damn?" where the existence of an afterlife is treated as a folly. I was eagerly awaiting this release. It has exceeded my expectations. –Rich Cocksedge (Black Numbers)

DENIZENZ: Self-titled: 12" EP
Somewhere between the Spits and the Rough Kids, tuneful punk rock that doesn't let up for a second! The songs move at a quick clip, though they do slow down here and there with songs like "My Problem" and "In the Night." Then there are songs like "Sticks & Stones" that march forward with a deliberate intention to disrupt. "Ideas" is a speedy scorcher confessing they "want your ideas for our heads!" Pretty solid listen the whole way through. Curiously, this was released in 2014, and I'm reviewing it in 2017. –Matt Average (Johnny Cat)

DIE NASTY: *Things That Make Moms Cry:* CD
Rock'n'roll from Seattle with a hint of punk, surf, rockabilly, and a heavy dose of really great guitar riffs. Vocals sound similar, but hard to place. Almost a hybrid of a growling Cyndi Lauper meets Courtney Love. –Cynthia Pinedo (Die Nasty)

DISCO//OSLO: *Tyke:* LP/CD
Firstly, hats off to this German quartet for providing English translations of its lyrics, as this always helps in appreciating what a band is trying to get across. The songs of Disco//

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Oslo—the name of the band has no meaning whatsoever—deal with many of the same issues that concern those of us immersed in the punk community with social equality, or the lack thereof, featuring highly. All of this is played out with guitars providing the oomph via thrusting chords and leads/riffs throwing in a post-punk feel to the songs, which have bundles of energy. I came across *Tyke* as I spent an evening trawling the internet. After one listen, I ordered this and the band's first album for less than £9 ($11). A most productive and satisfying few hours indeed. –Rich Cocksedge (Pumpkin / Kidnap)

D.O.A.*: Fucked Up Donald:* 7"
When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro, as Hunter Thompson once noted. But I don't think the Tricky-Dickish weirdness that Thompson beheld comes anywhere close to the national aneurysm we're now in the midst of, ever since the Joe-the-Plumber set shat King Alpha Douche into the oval office. We're way fucking beyond weird at this point. We now have a charmless reality TV oaf as president, equipped with little more than a clammy reptilian brain and a teenager's addiction to Twitter. Moreover, the cancerous fat of his ego is so metastatic that even his ear holes are blubbered up to the point that he's deaf to the world outside his own head. And Mammon only knows what sort of darkly Id-ish urges are ricocheting around inside that shut-off, tie-choked cranium. It might be naïve to think that such a simple folk art form as punk rock can trip up anything so determinedly brutish and feeding off the backed-up energy of so many constipated brains. But if you're being attacked in your bathroom by a rabid raccoon, even a common toilet plunger can do the trick. And I think few would argue that punk's golden era may have been when it stood up to the '80s reign of Reagan's doddering cultural atavism. Personally, just seeing some of the record covers and flyers from those days, with snide cartoon drawings of a very prune-faced Reagan looking clueless, still warms my heart. Thanks to King Alpha Douche, punk may be on the brink of a new vituperative golden age. This record might just be the beautiful beginning of that. D.O.A. has taken their snarling anti-Reagan ditty from the '80s and spray painted it with a coat of putrid Rich Guy orange. As potent as ever. Let the Resistance begin! –Aphid Peewit (Sudden Death)

DOWN LOVE: *Trust:* CD
From this U.K. band's one sheet, I was certain I'd love it, or at least was very interested in what a band that compares themselves to both Jawbreaker and Fugazi would sound like. It boils down to a louder and more paranoid-sounding emo band. We can call them post-punk if that helps too, but they're closest to early second wave emo, where it's still heavily hardcore-influenced. These guys are certainly cutting their teeth on this first record. It's real punchy yet still sweet and melodic. Their singer is why I can see the Jawbreaker reference. He belts out these words with so much reverence and intent that you can almost feel the polyps forming on his vocal chords. My one gripe is really just a personal one: too many lovelorn songs about girls and unrequited feelings. It honestly gets so old. Yes, put down your feelings into song. But don't stop there. Make it the most beautiful, smart, and self-aware love song that you can manage. To the point where people listening aren't sure if it's about a relationship. Either way, Down Love has some exceptional tracks that are a bit like Beach Slang, and a bit like Apologies, I Have None. A little fuzzy and a little gritty. –Kayla Greet (Boss Tuneage, bosstunage.com)

DRAKULAS: *Raw Wave:* LP
A concept album comprised of "songs told from the different points of view of various characters in a fictional metropolis in our not too distant past," courtesy of members of the Riverboat Gamblers and Rise Against, and produced by a couple o' Marked Men. Musically and sonically, this falls somewhere in the vicinity of the latter band and prime-era Dickies, with the more frenetic tunes coming off like stuff that T.V. Eye may have errantly left off one of their jam-packed forays into A.D.D.-length LPs for being too long. This is saturated with hooks flying in all directions and handily hitting their marks, delivered with a tautness that's becoming as synonymous with Texas as "weird" bands have been. Turn this shit up and let it rule your life. –Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap)

DUSTEATERS: *Transhumanism:* CS
The album art for this was a great preview of what's to come. Two cityscapes (one purple, one blue) stacked, one upside down with "Dusteaters" written on a ripped-out portion of the image. The sound is a little abrasive. It's colorful but not so colorful you can't focus on the elements. It sounds like it could be in a sci-fi movie. Genre-wise, the sound is one part punk, one part spaced-out garage rock. The tape sounds like a well-done live recording, which really makes me want to see this band if I get the chance. It's not a long tape, so just start from the beginning and listen through. You won't be disappointed. For fans of Spray Paint and William Gibson. –Nicole X (Hip Kid)

EARWORMS: *Superalien Coliseum:* CD
About a minute into the first song, I thought, "This reminds me of Low Fat Getting High, who also happen to be from New York." After some sleuthing, I discovered that Earworms' bassist, John Meredith, handles engineering, mixing, and mastering for LFGH. Even though Meredith doesn't exclusively handle recording duties for Earworms, both bands play speaker-destroying, metal-kissed rock with clear, confident productions. Earworms' riffs are epic and the vocalists, who belt with conviction, never stumble

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into the chasm of corniness. Unlike their previous full-length which veered more towards techy hardcore, *Superalien Coliseum* is high-concept metal, tangling me in its tasty guitar noodles. Like The Misfits with horror, Earworms unabashedly embrace their sci-fi theme: "Deployed from mother crown / A perfect single ship contains the spiral architect." In fact, the cover art reminds me of *New Gods*-era Jack Kirby. As someone with a vintage collection of Harlan Ellison and Philip K. Dick paperbacks, Earworms has tapped into my frequency. –Sean Arenas (Money Fire, moneyfirerecords.com)

ENDS MEET:
***Making Music Making Enemies:* CD**
Metallic guitars, thrashy rhythms, melodic vocals, and performance that is tight as fuck. From the first note it's clear these cats know how to play *well* and, unfortunately, that's their weakest link. Everything here is damned near perfect and professional sounding, which saps the end result of much-needed edge. All the gristle is scrubbed clean, leaving everything left drowning in sterility. Ah, well. –Jimmy Alvarado (Self-released)

ERIK NERVOUS: *Teen Distortion Art Junk Music: 7"* EP
Midwestern punk rock that sounds like it's coming straight outta 1979, courtesy of one dude and his Tascam four-track home recording setup. The bulk of the tunes have echoes of Texas malcontents the Hates in 'em, with the occasional synth inclusion to up the wavy-oddball factor. Tunes are strong and the performance has a tightness and sincerity that could've gone horribly wrong in the hands of lesser folk. –Jimmy Alvarado (Neck Chop, facebook.com/NeckChopRecords)

EVAPORATORS, THE:
***Ogopogo Punk:* CD**
You may know Vancouver's Nardwuar the Human Serviette as an interviewer who goes above and beyond in researching his interviewees. The Evaporators are like a Canadian Dead Kennedys with no edge and this record is no different. *Ogopogo Punk* is heavy in the keyboards with polka-inspired rhythms and has the goofy approach you've come to expect from the still-standing British Columbia classic. I'd prefer to watch Nardwuar's interviews, but this record is probably the sonic equivalent of that, so that's fine.
–Theresa W. (Mint)

EXPLODING EYES: Self-titled: CD
Everything about this record is deep in a '70s psychedelic aesthetic, from the bold-colored bubble letters of the insert (and all the merch) to the melodic, trippy rock of the record itself. From top to bottom, this record is all about that genre appeal. Probably aiming for something like Uriah Heep or Thin Lizzy, it ends up more in the vein of the Black Crowes, Jet, and The Darkness. –Theresa W. (Big Neck, bart@bigneckrecords.com, bigneckrecords.com)

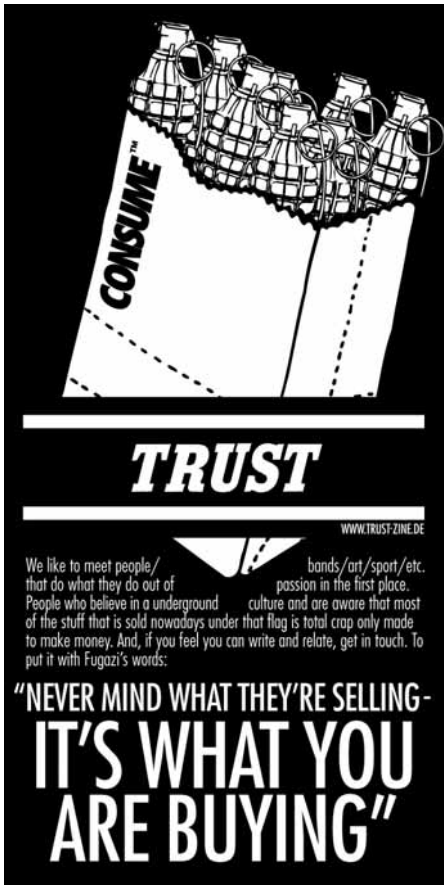
EXTERMINATORS, THE:
***Product of America:* LP**
Sometimes, records like this can backfire and sometimes they can start fire. *Product of America* is definitely the latter. The last time I heard a band pull something like this off, was when I heard OFF!. The Exterminators were a punk band from Arizona in 1977, who never released a single record until now. The current line up features members of The Germs, Meat Puppets, and Feederz. Most of the tracks are two-minute blasts of classic punk rock angst, with song titles like, "I Hate You," "I Don't Give a Fuck," and "Death Blow." I think you get the idea. There's a song called "Destruction Unit" on here where the band of the same name got their name. In my opinion it's the standout track. It's slower, with a hopeless feeling. I can't help but be curious to hear what these songs would have sounded like recorded in 1977, but with that being said, I don't know if they would be as furious and tight as they are here. A great record for any fan of punk rock. –Ryan Nichols (Slope)

FASHIONISM: *Subculture Suicide: 7"*
Totes magotes awesome. I challenge you to *not* hum the melody to the titular track after a first listen. In short, it comes off as a love song dedicated to the thrill of discovering a music that is yours—in this case a 45 that you identify as being created by persons not unlike yourself. It reminds me, in an abstract way, of the Ramones' "Do You remember Rock 'N Roll Radio?" I would be remiss if I didn't mention that the B-sides, "Stop, Drop, Rock 'N' Roll" and "Nun of That" pretty much rule as much as the A side. Dirt Cult strikes again! –Garrett Barnwell (Dirt Cult)

FINAL EXIT: *Seasons Are Going and Going…and Lives Goes On:* LP
Grind can be a polarizing genre, even within itself. From political or artistic noise (aces) to porno or virtuoso (nope). Japan's Final Exit set themselves squarely on the art/comedy paradigm, grinding from blinding blasts to weird rock breakdowns and noise interludes. Twelve tracks tracing the twelve months of the year (artsy!) and even Maiden's "Aces High" riff thrown into the month of June (comedy!). This is a vinyl release of their first 3" CD from Rage For All Records. One sided. Eleven minutes. Five hundred copies. Gatefold, same as CD. Locust or Boredoms worshippers, jump on this. –Matt Seward (SPHC)

FOUND DROWNED: *F.D.R.: 7"*
Pretty straightforward instrumental, punky surf rock. Not usually my thing, but I appreciated that it does what it's doing pretty well. I like song three, "Compact Disc," due to the "compact disc!" chant it contains. – Nicole X (Reality Is A Cult)

FREEZING HANDS: *II:* CS
The first Freezing Hands album played like a retrospective of the various stages of the Kinks. The band's second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continues on the spectrum of what can be done with '60s pop sensibilities without being entirely retro or contrived. There is a lot to mine on the twelve tracks. It's a well-crafted album with catchy songs that make an impression on the first listen. "Caffeine Dream" ventures into Spacemen 3 territory with a droning ride and excellent vocal harmonies. "Cold Pillow" is upbeat with catchy keyboard solo. They do the switching well without pounding you with genre. –Billups Allen (Burger)

FYPM / TO THE POINT: *"This Is Cleveland Not Los Angeles" b/w "This Is Los Angeles Not Cleveland": 7"*
Split from L.A.-based To The Point and Cleveland-based FYPM. Both bands play hardcore a little more on the grindcore/powerviolence side. These tracks are heavy, and in that realm they do not disappoint. Playing and production are good; they are definitely all well versed in how to sound hardcore, but some of the song and lyrical quality leaves much to be desired. The high point for me was To The Point's "Face in the Cloud" (despite a bit of luddite vibes that I'm not totally into but also sometimes harbor), and a puzzling one for me was FYPM's "Loss Leader" that is definitely within a genre of political hardcore that I love, but I think could have been lyrically more refined. Overall, it's a cool record. Bonus goodies: it comes with *Short Fast & Loud* zine #29, and FYPM's cover photo was shot by Martin Sorrendeguy! –Candace Hansen (Six Weeks)

GARY LLAMA: *The Beauty of Music:* CD
Gary Llama's *The Beauty of Music* took me by the surprise. I do not like the title and I was nervous this was going to be an acoustic project. Turns out, Gary just takes DIY very seriously and did everything himself. Skip track five, "Medium." It's instrumental disco and nobody needs that. Actually, just stick with tracks two, four, seven, and eight. Gary shines in those tracks—a mix of The Dandy Warhols, Bowie, and Lou Reed that grew on me. –Nicole X (OVLR! / Debackle)

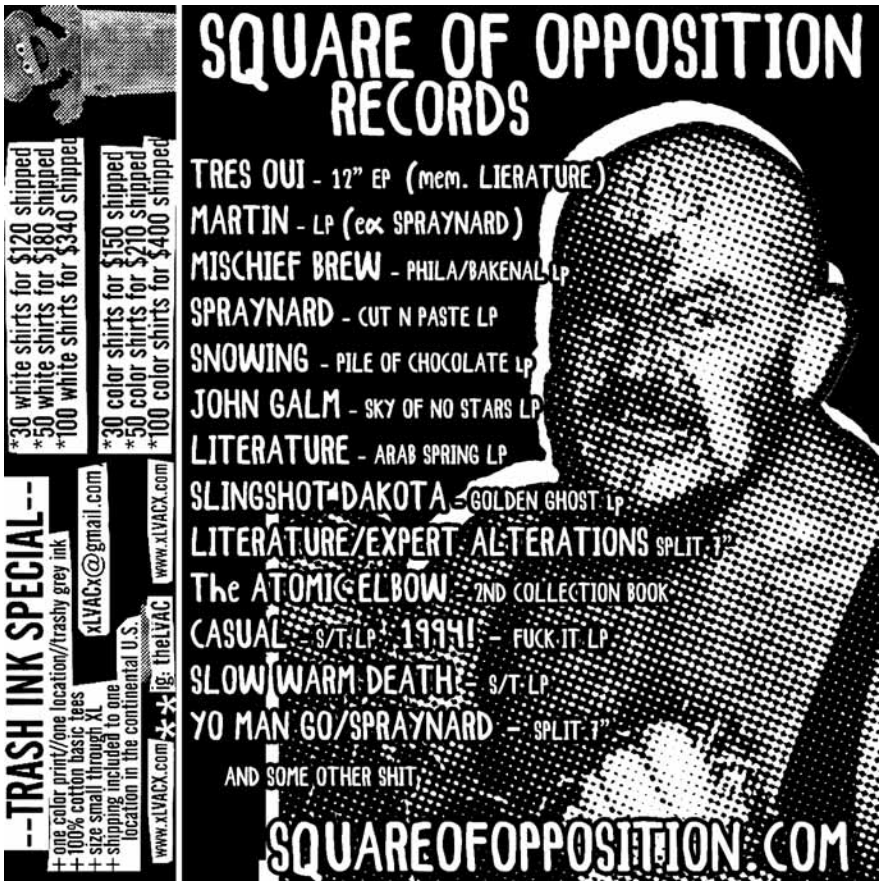
GHOWL: *In the Woods:* CD
So you've listened to all your Rob Zombie CDs so much that you just don't care anymore, but it will probably be like six whole months before he drops a new record, so what the fuck do you *dooooo*? Ghowl is here to fill the gap. They may not have the sexy dreadlocks, but their Rob Zombie impersonation is pitch perfect. Well, they mute some of the dancier stuff, and their horror references don't go much deeper than *Nightmare on Elm Street*, but still, the world needs at least one second-rate Rob Zombie clone, right? Right? –MP Johnson (Self-released, ghowl.eu)

GIRL POWER: Self-titled: 7"
Girl Power's nuclear 7" is as fierce as Elizabeth Warren's stance on Wall Street bankers, shattering all your glass windows (and ceilings). No stranger to brevity, their brutal five-song EP packs a serious punch in just over seven minutes. Sharp lyrics sewn into catchy, caustic cuts will have you hooked from the first lick. Also worth mentioning are their seriously excellent stage names: Olivia Neutron Bomb, Stephen Nicks, and Brother Teresa. This EP mixed with the U.S.'s current political climate kinda makes me want to migrate to Oxford so I can beg these cats to let me be the fourth member of their band, but I guess I'll just have to see how the rest of the year goes. Incidentally, *Girl Power* makes a perfect soundtrack for The Apocalypse, sponsored by Trump & Co.™! –Simone Carter (Richter Scale)

GLOBS, THE: *Do You Feel Weird?:* CS
Sticky, oozing, flawless punk pop seeping out of those familiar Sacramento cracks. It's like your favorite band made better. Mike R. Mike (of The Bananas) is in full form and has a hell of a band backing him up. While The Bananas did more with less, The Globs are all about doing more with more! Bring in some keyboards, up the female vocals; bring the whole damn Indomitable City in. It's happy sadness riding into the sunset. Glorious, proud, and impossible to defeat. Hopefully this will be available on vinyl very soon. –Daryl (Self-released, charlesalbright@gmail.com)

GRAND:
***Another Day Closer to Nothing:* CDEP**
Four-song release from this melodic trio from Vermont. Fans of The AV Club may recognize the voice, but this band stands on its own merits. The title track and "Two Weeks ('Till the End of the World)" will keep your feet tapping while you crank it up. Mastered by Luke McNeil (The Copyrights), so you know it will sound fantastic. Can't wait to hear more from this band. –Sean Koepenick (Self-released, facebook/grandtheband)

GREEN DREAMS:
***Here at Castle Makeout:* CD**
A compact disc cleverly hidden in seven-inch clothing, the amazingly elaborate fold-out packaging instantly confers substantial gravitas to the musical contents, simply by virtue of nuttiness alone. With Bikini Kill vocals, Elastica bass, and guitars of molten snot, I was hopeful that these twelve songs would transport me to the ethereal kingdom of Shalla-Boo-Bal, where I would pop boner after boner on the floating pink altar of elevated ferret priapism as fox-headed vixens fed me purple Skittles and fanned my fevered brow with lenticulated cover versions of *Their Satanic Majesties Request*, but my attempted spiritual awakening was deadened with relatively banal subject matter ("too cool to care, well I think you're the square") and it only transported me to the back yard two doors down, where I saw two squirrels have angry sex on a bed of broken chestnuts. Nice try, though. Sorry I wasn't high when I listened to it! BEST SONG: "Be Here Now." BEST SONG TITLE: "Psychic Woes." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Includes samples from the movie *9 to 5* with Dolly Parton! –Rev. Nørb (Self-released)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HAKAN: *II:* LP
Does the word "hakan" translate to Marked Men? I am pretty sure it doesn't, but it should. This Italian band definitely has a lot of love for Denton's finest (as should we all). There are several keys as to why this band and record are so amazing. 1.) They have the chops and the songs—so catchy, and so good! 2.) While they pay obvious homage to Marked Men, they don't come off like a carbon copy. There is enough Hakan in the mix to own it and have me wanting to hear more rather than just wanting to put *Fix My Brain* on. 3.) It can do nothing but help to have Jeff Burke (of the holy quaternity itself) record your album. It sounds so damn good. In an age where chances are slim that the Marked Men are going to get together to record new music together (no matter how much I will it to happen), I am happy that Hakan is out there to partially fill that empty space in my heart. –Ty Stranglehold (Drunken Sailor)

HAYLEY AND THE CRUSHERS: *Jewel Case:* CD
Imagine looking at your journals from being a teenager and using them as your muse to write a whole album. Inspiration comes from many places, and Hayley's high school notebook drawings influenced *Jewel Case*. Twelve syrupy-sweet, surf pop punk songs cover topics like hooking up in the backseat, mermaids, glitter, and young love. Self-proclaimed as "anthems that conjure up the image of Joan Jett on a surfboard," I have to agree. I could definitely see her rocking out at Pismo Beach to these songs. –Cynthia Pinedo (Lost State)

HEAT: Self-titled: 7″
Brutish, brooding, belligerent hardcore from San Diego. Low-end vocals coming at you like the bastard son of Denunzio and Brannon. You get your mosh parts, you get your head bang parts, you get your fast parts, and then it's over as violently as it began. This is the kind of shit that just annihilates live, so if you see 'em on a flyer, you know what to do. –Daryl (Deranged)

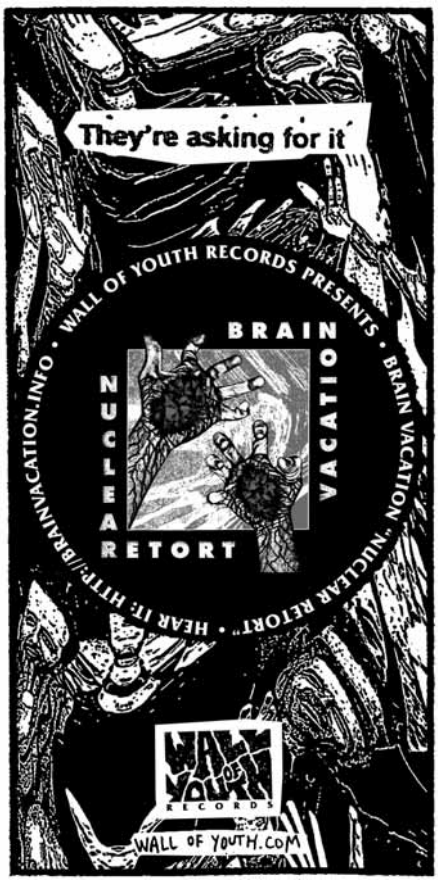
HEAVY POCKETS: *Mopeless:* CS
First, a confession: my tape deck sounds like shit. It cost less than thirty dollars and was purchased—after my ancient boombox died—for the express purpose of writing reviews. I'm a centrist when it comes to the obsolete technology renaissance: appreciative of the charm, but also a pragmatist who believes download codes are a necessary concession. Unfortunately for me, New Hampshire indie pop trio Heavy Pockets' fourteen-track full-length cassette, *Mopeless*, arrived woefully absent a download code. Or a track listing. Or a visible title. Or a legible band name. With no information handy, the tape had to speak for itself, but through my Broksonic—a company that, these days, mostly produces fancy humidifiers—Heavy Pockets' feminist-friendly powerpop sounds more like a litter of kittens trapped in an industrial clothes dryer. On the upside, two tracks are available to stream online: "Love Song," an ode to complex emotion that aurally recalls Letters To Cleo and Save Ferris more than Bikini Kill or Bratmobile, and "(dont wanna be) One of the Boys," an anthem for all the ambivalent femmes out there, which sonically channels Best Coast as much as the beachy '60s pop that inspired them. Despite the layers of exploding hairdryers my tragic tape deck adds to *Mopeless*' production, it sounds like the record's twelve other tracks fall neatly in line with these two catchy singles, making it a worthwhile get for fans of the genre who like a little social critique with their upbeat bangers—and who possess the proper technology. Lacking that last caveat, perhaps it's best to seek it out on vinyl via Dead Broke Rekerds and Cat Dead Details Later. –Kelley O'Death (Reflective Tapes)

HELLKRUSHER: *Wasteland:* CD
Boss Tuneage are truly killing it with their reissues of late. Having never heard Hellkrusher before, *Wasteland* is far further in the realm of anarcho/thrash than standard d-beat. Fans of mid-period Discharge and classic U.K. crust will be all over this, if they're not already. –Steve Adamyk (Boss Tuneage, bosstuneage.bigcartel.com)

HELMS ALEE: *Stillicide:* LP
What a fantastic, delicious addition to Seattle three-piece Helms Alee's arsenal. It slips perfectly in between The Melvins and Dead Meadow with the precision that is tighter than you'd expect from a band that blurs the line between noise and sludge so well. As a concept, stillicide is the continual dripping of water, and this record catches on that reality of Pacific Northwest life to explore the cosmic and conceptual space of living in a place where the ocean is constantly raining down on you. If you can listen to a song like "Galloping Mind Fuk" and not throw your head around, I don't believe you are human. Only a true Pacific Northwestern metal band could bring together gloom and beauty so perfectly, showing how haunting darkness cut through with foggy light can really be. –Theresa W. (Sargent House)

HERD OF WASTERS: *Total Stinker:* LP
What happens when you let three Turbojugend dudes from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan record an album? You get this fun, inspired, nineteen-song release of grimy, catchy bar punk. The production of this LP was made possible with support from Creative Saskatchewan's Sound Recording Program, which is beyond cool. There's been an influx of killer Canadian bands these past few years, with Herd Of Wasters happily joining in. I like the vocalist's snarl; and the recording is appropriately slick. *Total Stinker* is anything but a stinker. –Art Ettinger (Wastedwax, wastedwax.ca)

HOLLOW SUNSHINE: *Bible Sea:* 12″ EP
Electronic dark wave. The drone factor is ratcheted up to twenty, the



tempos slow, the tone dour and dire, and yet there's an ethereal quality that counteracts the gloom, almost like a sliver of sunlight in the middle of a storm. Interesting. –Jimmy Alvarado (Iron Pier, ironpier.net)

HOLLYWOOD KILLERS: *Goodbye Suicide:* 7"
What we've got here is a U.S. reissue of a high dollar 1978 single from a band from the U.K. Splitting the difference between junkshop glam and Sensational Alex Harvey Band weirdness, this Hollywood Killers single is a standout of the era. Fans of the weird side of glam or the early era of post-punk would find a whole lot to like here. There is an experimental aspect at play that would more than likely turn off most fans of straightforward glam or powerpop sounds. Certainly not the average reissue, there is an interesting thing going on with this band that sets them apart from others of the era. –Mike Frame (Mighty Mouth)

HOT LZ'S, THE: *Aggravate My Mind:* LP
The monotone '80s style and robotic Devo vocals give the Hot LZ's sound a weirder tilt on their straight-ahead rock'n'roll riffs with heavy Dead Boys and Stooges sensibilities. –Camylle Reynolds (Hate Street)

HOT TIP: *Hold Me, Closely:* LP
I was worried this LP would never see the light of day. Hot Tip make the kind of gnarled, frantic punk that can turn sports bars and college house parties into radical American outposts. With *Hold Me, Closely* they've made a statement with the kind of depth and expressiveness you used to hear in a Fugazi record (*Hold Me* at times can feel like a companion piece to *Steady Diet of Nothing*). That they manage to fit so much texture and nuance and mood into seemingly uncomplicated two minute songs (see "Fiction" and "Neat Mess") is remarkable. Who else is doing that? I think it's just Hot Tip. –Matt Werts (Bitch Face, bitchfacerecords.storenvy.com / One Percent Press, onepercentpress.com / Radical Empathy)

HUMAN BEHAVIOR: *Kedumim:* CD
Christ. *Kedumim* is a truly impressive album that left me feeling like I need to see a priest. With beautifully evocative lyrics that were seemingly written by a religious fanatic with a sex addiction, Human Behavior adroitly blends an unsettling narrative with grandiose production and gorgeous instrumentation. Featuring a slew of zany instruments from all corners of the globe (banjo, erhu, koto, glockenspiel), the band's intercontinental third album sounds a lot like mewithoutYou intermingled with Neutral Milk Hotel. Just sprinkle in some operatic singing/eerie whistling and you've got yourself an indier-than-thou opus. Not for the faint of heart, nor ye of little faith. Now listen to this album and repent! –Simone Carter (Folktale, folktalerecords.com / Related, relatedrecords.storeenvy.com)

HUMUS: *Eterna Condanna:* LP
Fast, crusty hardcore bordering on grindcore, out of Italy. I dig the passion and aggression and love the message ("Humus still fan the flame of rebellion and promote direct action against the oppressors."), though there aren't really any individual, memorable songs here. If anything, this record is the aural equivalent to how I feel immediately following those precious few peaceful moments when I wake up in the morning, before remembering that an orange, dimwitted, narcissistic liar was intentionally selected by forty-six percent of actual adult humans in this country to occupy the most important office on planet earth. (Sigh). Sometimes you just need a soundtrack to your rage, and this LP serves that purpose. –Chad Williams (To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com)

IDIOTA CIVILIZZATO: *La Vita Silenziosa:* 7"
Deranged punk rock in Italian, from a band based in Germany, featuring personnel from three different countries. I would lay money down that Die Kreuzen's debut album must have formed essential listening for those individuals, given how the frenzied seven tracks on this single remind me of that band. I love it when a band creates a sound creates a sense of chaos and lack of control, yet which actually manages to just about grasp onto a coherence which keeps it from running off the rails. That is what Idiota Civilizzato has achieved here with a sensation of barely holding it together gushing excitedly from the speakers. –Rich Cocksedge (Static Shock)

ISOTOPE SOAP: *Frontal Disorder Post Mental Border:* 7" EP
Former members of Pusrad, and Raped Teenagers before 'em, get their synthpunk on. There are, of course, some Devoesque moments—"Circle Jerk" would've fit nicely on *Duty Now for the Future*—and a more accessible tune here and there, but the "weirdo" factor is kept on high, and the thrashier bits have wild time changes that would've made Frisco hardcore legends Code Of Honor jealous. Hope these cats keep this going, at least long enough to cough up a full-length, 'cause the shit here's pretty danged tasty. –Jimmy Alvarado (Isotope Soap)

J. R. FISHER: *Fever:* CS
I haven't hung out in bars or smoked out on the porch with J. R. Fisher, so I may not be the guy to really talk about him. He's a folk singer, and sometimes he's good and sometimes he's making jokes I don't totally get. I think his work is strongest when he's not joking and not swearing, i.e. "Torture My Soul" and the latter half of "Four Very Different Girls," which could've run over the credits to *Pete & Pete*. "Run Gringo Run"—a brief, electric John Fahey-esque guitar ramble—is the hit for me. Fisher's like a '70s folk-rocker who knows all the Pixies records, which is to say there's charm here. –Matt Werts (What's For Breakfast)

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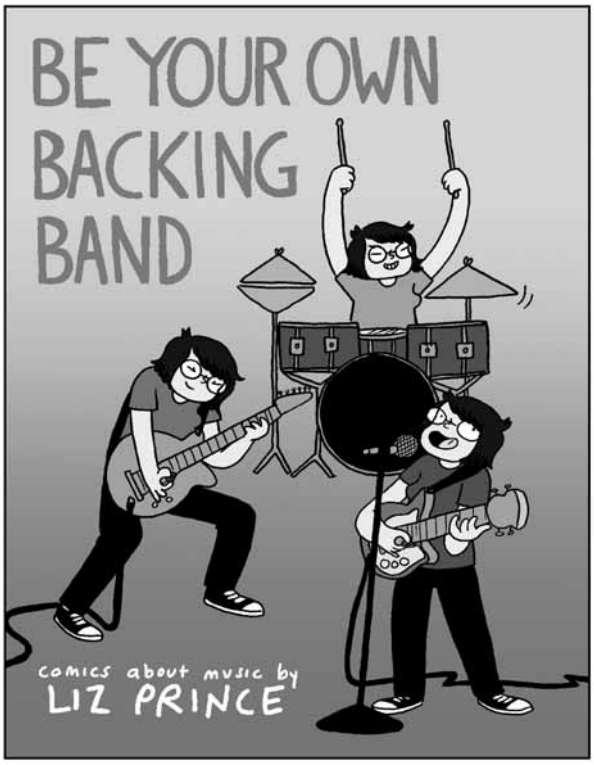

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JASON BENNETT AND THE RESISTANCE: *Heavy Weather:* CDEP
Jason and his cohorts have been bashing out punk anthems since 2006. Props to them for keeping their heads above water that long. If politically-fueled anthems are in your wheelhouse, then this deserves a listen. Life and love are touched upon, too. If any songs by Stiff Little Fingers and/or The Alarm ever got you to turn the knob up, then grab this one while it is hot. –Sean Koepenick (Self-released, JBandtheResistance@gmail.com)

JJ DOLL: *JJ DOLL:* 7"
NYC hardcore quartet JJ Doll is fucking awesome, but it's tough to put your finger on one distinct reason. Maybe it's their freaky song structures or shredding-yet-melodic and deliberately-atonal-at-times guitar that drives most of their songs. Maybe it's their lead vocalist Sara's style that jumps from poppy hooks and squeals, ala CSS, to classic punky articulation. Whatever it is, they're doing it right. Great writing, great songs, great lyrics, all tied together with a really nice and simple record layout and insert. Very excited to hear what comes next. –Candace Hansen (Katorga Works)

JOHN WESLEY COLEMAN III: *Microwave Dreams:* LP
I used to be a terrible procrastinator, and I feel the old "gotta get this done" pressure as I'm writing this review just a day before deadline. I swear I haven't been lazy. I haven't bought anything new in forever (life has been reaching into my wallet lately, stealing my play money before I have a chance to spend it). But the angels at Super Secret Records dropped a new John Wesley Coleman LP on payday, so I hid some money before life's sticky fingers could get it! So now I gotta synthesize a whole LP in less than twenty-four hours. What, am I professional journalist now? Mr. JWC seems to have slowed down a bit in the quantity of releases, as there is just over a year gap between 2015's *Greatest Hits* and 2017's *Microwave Dreams*. I'm pretty sure he hasn't released anything else in the meantime, and if so, I missed it. Slowing down is not a bad thing. It gives fans like myself a chance to catch up. *Microwave Dreams* is less party slop rock than some of JWC's early releases, and more in the somber/wistful vein of *Greatest Hits*. JWC sings of adult responsibilities (fatherhood, having to wake up at 7 AM) in "On the Couch Again," but still reminisces about his younger, knuckle-headed self in "Jesus Never Went to Junior High." He still wants everyone to dance ("Shovel"), and piano and saxophone flourishes sneak in at just the right times throughout the album to get one's hips moving. To wit, during the release show for this album, two women stopped on the sidewalk outside the club and danced for a few songs. –Sal Lucci (Super Secret)

KLITZ, THE: *Live at the Well:* 7"
I'm a little embarrassed to admit that I hadn't heard of The Klitz until this record showed up at my door, but I felt like less of a poser after reading that they never actually put out a record during their initial '78-'80 run, making them a bit of an obscurity. This 7" is a release of archival recordings that are a looking glass into the late 1970s and early 1980s Memphis punk rock scene through the lens of women having fun while making noise at its ground level. Complete with an insert that serves as a short oral history of the band, the 7" features two original songs and two covers, including "AfterHours," my personal favorite Velvet Underground jam. Their sound is simple and full of imperfect, distorted swagger in a sort of Cramps meets Suburban Lawns kind of way; rudimentary but smart, adolescent and full of charm, with no intentions of fame or invocations of nostalgia. –Candace Hansen (Spacecase)

LIQUIDS: *More Thana Friend:* 7"
Hot on the heels of last year's *Hot Liqs* album, Indiana's Liquids are back with three more punk rock heat blasts to squeeze blackheads in the bathroom mirror to. Raw and snotty is the soup of the day and Liquids are serving it up. Only 111 copies got pressed, so if you got it, you're stoked. If not, the tunes are up on Drunken Sailor's Bandcamp page. Killer! –Ty Stranglehold (Drunken Sailor)

LOPEZ, THE: *Kill Yr Selfie:* 7"
Watch out, y'all—this synthpunk band from Pittsburgh ain't messin' around and they ain't gonna play by your rules. The new The Lopez EP is here and it's ready to tear off your fake nails and rip out your hoops. Taking several cues from The Julie Ruin and other righteous riot grrrl groups, The Lopez embrace dissonance on the expertly entitled *Kill Yr Selfie*. The singer's squealing vocals camouflage well within the EP's abrasive ambiance, which is comprised of scarily jagged guitar riffs and droning synths that sometimes sound like demented bagpipes. *Kill Yr Selfie* is femme punk at its most aggressive, and it even includes a seriously wicked cover of "Sea Babies" by Beat Happening / Screaming Trees. For sure worth checking out, but do be warned: your ears may ring for the rest of the day. –Simone Carter (Self-released)

LOVE SONGS, THE: *Oh, the Places You'll Go Wrong:* CD
The Love Songs mix a few genres here: pop punk, flamenco, a touch of bluegrass, a touch of prog rock, and twenty seconds of A Perfect Circle to kick off track seven ("D"). I think this is why I have incredibly mixed reactions when faced with this record. I have felt different each time: I liked it the first time, I loathed it the second time, I accepted it the third time. Just about every other song has a Descendents flair; the rest are different and interesting for their own reasons. –Nicole X (1986'd)

LOW CULTURE: *Places to Hide:* LP
The Denton Mafia does it again. The latest from this Marked Men offshoot is pure bliss, deftly combining punk

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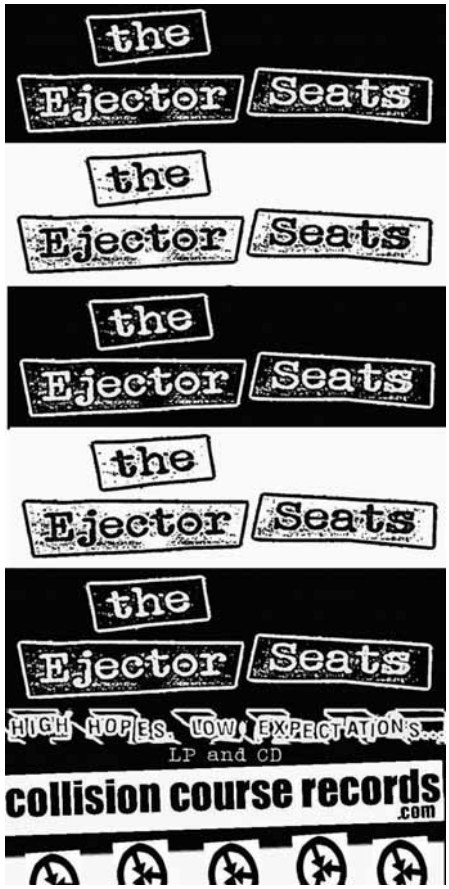


fire and powerful pop hooks filled with all sorts of subtle intricacies for the attentive that burrow deep, hold fast, and resonate long. Easily the record to pick for me this cycle. Brief review, yes, but it's hard to wax all philosophic and shit when you're dancing this goddamned hard. –Jimmy Alvarado (Dirtnap)

LOWEST FORM, THE: ***Personal Space:*** **LP**
If memory serves me correctly, I seem to recall the Lowest Form as a much heavier hardcore beast. That's in no way a complaint however. Stripping down the wall of noise guitars I associated with their first full-length, *Negative Ecstasy*, reveals previously unnoticed layers of Rudimentary Peni weirdness, pogo punk, and even a little trip-hop influence on the opening track. I'm going to be perfectly honest when I say that I initially felt that a second full-length as a follow-up release was a bit presumptuous, but now I'll just eat those fucking words. NWOBHC is cool, too, but shit, don't underestimate the weirdo punk faction: the Lowest Form are to be considered armed and dangerous. Approach with caution. –Juan Espinosa (Iron Lung)

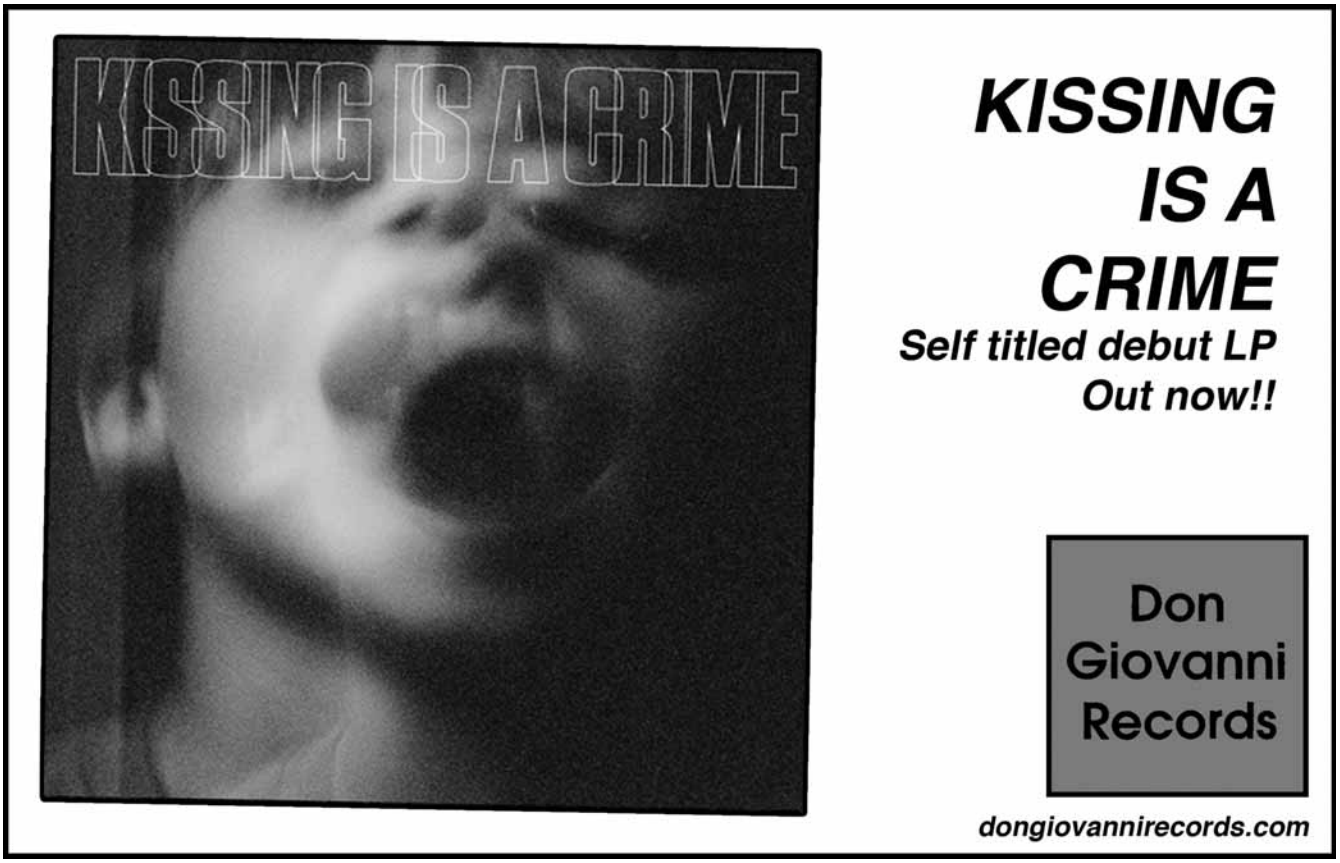
MAD PARADE: ***Real Horror Show (1982-83 Demos):*** **LP**
Been a fan of these cats since the first time I saw them at a "Dollar Night" show at the Cathay de Grande in Hollywood—a gig that also served both as my first non-backyard punk gig and the first time I ever graced a stage as a musician with my first full, semi-functional band, Six Gun Justice—right around the time these demos were recorded. They stood out on a bill with a few memorable bands, with that California-meets-Britain sonic melding that they've honed into their signature sound over numerous decades and releases since. These recordings are of the band in their formative prime, with some early versions of songs—"Real Horror Show," "I'm a Monster," and "Sex & Violence," "Calling Out,"—that would find homes on their first two records, as well as a number that didn't make it past these demos, like the flat-out smokin' "Tell the Truth," which alone is worth the price of purchase here. As they've done so many times before, Hostage has pulled from the ether some primo tunes from a band much beloved, and sweetens the deal with colored vinyl, an insert with lyrics, and liner notes for each tune. –Jimmy Alvarado (Hostage)

MANATEEES: ***Superman Dam Fool:*** **LP**
The first five Manateees 7"s and other early tracks/mixes are compiled on this convenient, delightful LP. Manateees hail from Memphis and continue that city's rich history of garage punk. Playing raw, lo-fi tunes with distorted vocals and ridiculous lyrics, this LP is for anyone into the Goner Records scene. Feeling more like a cohesive album than a collection of initial works, *Superman Dam Fool* is a solid introduction to this awesome band that is anything but foolish. –Art Ettinger (Blak Skul, blakskul.bigcartel.com)

MANIAC: ***Midnight Kino: 7"***
I am really naïve. Even though the album art of this power pop punk single is a photo of a shop emblazoned with the words "vidio-sex" all over it, it took me a while to get the lyrics to "Midnight Kino." The last lyric is "pajas por el Reeperbahn," which I Google Translated ASAP. I understand Spanish (or so I thought), and didn't know what "pajas" meant. The first translations were cute, like the Swedish one that meant "comedian, clown, or buffoon." I still didn't get it. Spanish to English pulled up "straws" which didn't make sense, then "masturbation." Bingo. Masturbation in the Reeperbahn, a major red-light district in Germany. *Ohh*. Kino means "movie theater" in German. Masturbating in the midnight movie theater. Got it. There are 450 pressed total, and one hundred of the copies are pressed on red vinyl with a bonus peep window on the cover. –Cynthia Pinedo (Modern Action)

MANUAL SEX DRIVE: ***Music Is Dead:*** **CD**
Man, I really don't like this band's name. Or the album's title. But aside from those two details, I don't particularly enjoy the music either. Cheesy synths and a bloated trombone awkwardly accompany the band's stringed instruments and the singer's off-key yodels. I think they're going for a Less Than Jake instrumental feel meets a Panic! At The Disco bad boy neo-Sinatra vibe, but one can't be sure. During his better moments, the singer almost hits a Jello Biafra-esque vocal bravado, which is cool. But for each bearable refrain, there's a cornball verse to match. Maybe if *Music Is Dead* were mixed better I wouldn't find it so aggravating. But then again, maybe I'm giving a band that voluntarily chose the name "Manual Sex Drive" too much credit. –Simone Carter (Self-released, manualsexdrive.com)

MARCEL DUCHAMP: ***La Vida de Las Personas:*** **LP**
A new band to me. Subsequent investigative work informed me that it hails from Chile, with its first release being back in 2000. Named after the renowned artist Marcel Duchamp, my initial impression was of a straightforward punk rock band, but as the album progressed, it exposed a more angular and noise rock tone, occasionally entering the realm of Coffin Break. *La Vida de Las Personas* has grown with every play, and I still feel that I haven't taken it all in yet, as there always seems to be some nuance which I had previously overlooked. How long that will last I don't know, but I'm certainly going to keep going even when I feel I have reached that point of being totally up to speed with this piece of work. An added bonus is that there is a healthy back catalogue for me to plunder, which I intend to do with relish. –Rich Cocksedge (Inhumano, inhumano.org)



MARKET EAST: ***"Orange & Me" b/w "Our Love Will Always Win":*** **7"**
Listening to this made me feel like I'd discovered some hidden jewel of the '60s. With nectarous harmonies and viscous grooves, Market East strike a congruent balance between pop, psych, and soul in their latest EP. And though it's only two songs long, this EP feels like a fully realized creative vision. Market East's ornate wall-of-sound production would assuredly earn a nod of approval from Phil Spector himself—as would their lovesick lyrics and clever cadences. It's like if the *Magical Mystery Tour* made lengthy pit stops in Malibu and Detroit, picking up some Beach Boys and Motown influences along the way. If this is what Market East can do with two songs, I can't wait to see what they'll do with ten. –Simone Carter (La-Ti-Da)

MATT EVERETT: ***White Sugar:*** **CD**
There's no getting around that the first track of this CD is basically disco. Then it leans toward whispery singer-songwriter indie for a minute, goes a little bit experimental, kinda swings back toward the disco at some point, and mixes in some psych rock. I'm trying not to let it be completely obvious that the disco thing immediately and irreversibly turned me off to this, but that's what happens when you send *White Sugar* in to a punk zine. Please let the title of this album not be a reference to how this dude is a white guy playing soul-influenced music. This sounds like every third demo CD I imagine you'd have handed to you every day if you worked at a coffee shop that did open mics. –Indiana Laub (75orLess)

MEMORY LOSS: ***Blackout:*** **7"**
Apt names for both the band and its debut four-track release, as this is hardcore punk which could potentially inflict a concussion on the unsuspecting listener. So much so that it wouldn't do any harm for this to come with a disclaimer saying, "Listening to this record could impair your ability to function normally." The guitar sounds more like a huge serrated edge blade ripping through a large concrete block than it does a musical instrument, as it creates a wall of noise which could be mistaken for the beginning of the end of the world. Beneath this mayhem sits the vocals and the rhythm section offering an equally apocalyptic output. Not for the faint hearted. –Rich Cocksedge (Vinyl Conflict, info@vinylconflict.com, vinylconflict.com)

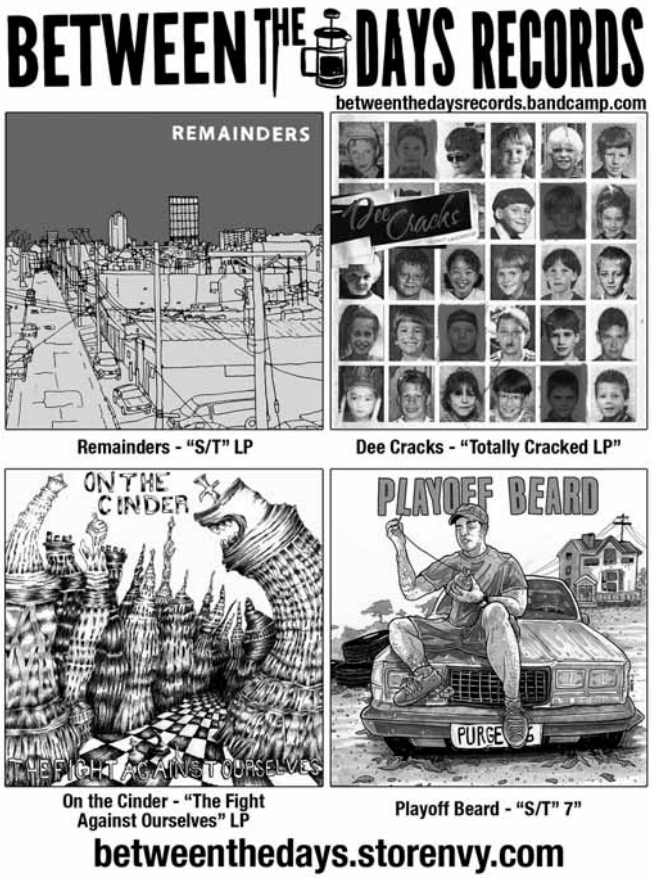
MENTAL DISTRESS: Self-titled*:* ***7"***
Five tracks of French hardcore built around a ferocious and blurry delivery whilst the vocals are barked out, almost in a state of desperation. Throw in a few short, broody musical interludes and, in short, that is Mental Distress. This is a marvellous record, which makes my nerve endings tingle and my whole body shake. It's released on ten labels, but mine came from Crapoulet in France. –Rich Cocksedge (Crapoulet, cool@crapoulet.fr, crapoulet.fr)

MOBINA GALORE: ***Single & B-side:*** **7"**
Until I saw Mobina Galore support Against Me! at the tail end of 2016, I'd only listened to the band via the internet. However, I took the opportunity to pick up this 7"—as well as the band's *Cities Away* album—at that gig. The guitar and drum duo manages to combine punchy punk rock with a shitload of melody in its songwriting, resulting in a thoroughly enjoyable listening experience. After quite a while of head scratching, I had a eureka moment when I realized that it strongly reminded me of a stripped-down Fabulous Disaster, which is probably the best comparison I can think of. Released primarily for the U.K./European tour, there is a digital version with four tracks via New Damage Records. –Rich Cocksedge (Gunner, gunnerrecords.com)

MOMOTAROS, THE: ***Semi-Canon:*** **CS**
These guys make some classic Midwestern rock'n'roll with semi-screamed vocals that recall Ian Svenonius in Nation Of Ulysses. The tape meanders from college rockish tunes, to slightly more abrasive ones, to even pop punkish tracks featuring multi-part vocal harmonies. The use of synths throughout all the rocking and the slightly unhinged quality of the vocals set this tape apart. A jammer, for sure. –Lyle (Rare Plant)

MONGOLOIDS: ***Plays Rock and Roll:*** **LP**
No clue where these kids hail from, but if they ain't from the Midwestern United States, they're hailing from somewhere just as infuriating. Pure hardcore onslaught from needle drop to runout: muscley, pummeling, and pissed off. Definitely gets the blood pumping and the ass off the seat. They hit the nail on the head and wrap it up with a nice bow here. –Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

MOONDOGS: ***When Sixteen Wasn't So Sweet:*** **12" EP**
I'm not sure what it means for the health and vitality of Da Scene In General when we keep having to strip-mine the kicks of the past in order to best facilitate the kicks of the present, but I suppose it's sorta like fossil fuel: You basically just hope you die before you run out of stuff. That said, these five obscure-as-the-white-buffalo power pop (ish) gems (as recorded on January 1st, 1980—I seem to recall watching Blondie on TV whilst babysitting the night before) leave me precious little to really complain about: They sound a bit like a roughed-up, basement Shoes, with lyrics that deviate unexpectedly from tropes of the genre (e.g., the title track is a sweet and catchy pop song that somehow winds up with guns on the beach). The three songs on the A side are faster and shorter, the two on the flip are longer and slower; none of it is fast and short nor long and slow enough to be noteworthy in its fastness and shortness nor longness and slowness. One must wonder how the hell songs as good as these can go essentially unheard at the time, and only be dragged, squinting, into the light of



day the better part of four decades later. Ah well, if our fate is well and truly in the hands of Rock's archaeologists, so be it. *Drill, baby, drill!* BEST SONG: "When Sixteen Wasn't So Sweet." BEST SONG TITLE: "Moon Wave Surfers." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The Moondogs were WWF tag team champions in the early '80s, and Moondog Spot died in the ring in 2003. –Rev. Nørb (Almost Ready)

NASHGUL: *Cárcava:* LP
Grindcore: a genre I have yet to crack. I can manage a few bands from grindcore's slightly more accessible brother, death metal (Death is all-time in any metal subgenre), but something about the combination of blastbeats and screaming vocals—without recognizable song structures—just leaves my ears in pain, but without the energizing payoff of the best thrashing hardcore and metal bands. All that said, the recording quality here is great and the art is fantastic, so if you even remotely dig Napalm Death, you should check this out. –Chad Williams (To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com)

NASROT: *Totalne Nasrot:* LP
Looking to "one-up" your friends' obscene knowledge of Swedish d-beat? Tell 'em that was so 2007, that you're only into Czech trash punk from the late '80s, then flabbergast them with your knowledge of Nasrot. Nasrot (translation "drunk as fuck") were a hardcore Cz band from '88-'89, donning matching brown leather jackets and scruffy appearances to mess with pre-conceived notions of mohawks and bondage pants, yet producing blistering short, fast Dead Kennedys-style punk. Lyrics swung from their love of the drink, dubbing themselves "pub-core," to the hardships of living in a Communist state. The Nasrot discography may not receive a whole lot of repeat spins, but it makes an interesting and entertaining aural history lesson. –Matt Seward (PHR, phr.cz)

NATURAL SWAY: *Sweet Life: LP*
On first listen, I pictured the "shabby chic" diner that would play this album while charging me fourteen dollars for tofu scramble and dry toast and five dollars for a cup of coffee served in a mason jar. A few more listens, the frigid aloofness and irony of instant-everything-nothing-matters internet culture melted away and I was reminded of life without Instagram and Pitchfork. Camping. Falling asleep in the backseat. Dancing barefoot in the kitchen. Ten songs about fireflies, alcohol, highways, tea with honey, dancing, nostalgia, and sweaters. *Sweet Life* is what you *want* to hear at an open mic but rarely actually do. It's kind. Folky and raw but self-aware. A little reminder when memes are taking over, that not *everything* needs to be flippant, perfectly posed to look effortless, or cynical. For those who could get down in a country bar (maybe secretly like their drinks in mason jars), and had a time where they really loved Ben Gibbard. Not for those who think crying is weak. –Griffin Wynne (Self-released, naturalsway.bandcamp.com)

NEGATIVE SEX: *"Rats for Lost" b/w "White Noise/Brain Fatigue": 7"*
Reno's Negative Sex makes dystopian hardcore post-punk with driving basslines and ripping guitars that sonically mimic the bleak content of the lyrics (included on their smartly-designed record sleeve, which could double as a bookmark). It's cool, dark stuff. Worth hearing. –Lyle (Carbonated Sounds, negativesexx.bandcamp.com)

NEGATIVE SEX: *Negative Sex: 7"*
Intense drums and echoy vocals open up this heavy post-punk album by Reno's Negative Sex. Three haunting-sounding tracks under the seven-minute mark left me wanting more. The guitarist and bassist sound great, and the drums balance everything out so well. Everyone is really good at what they do. The lyrics sounded like slam poetry alternating between being yelled and chanted, but I liked it. I liked it a lot. –Cynthia Pinedo (Carbonated Sounds)

NEW BERLIN: *Basic Function:* LP
I'm really psyched on this record by Austin punks, New Berlin. Right away, they reminded me of The Spits, which is a good thing. Sometimes, it's refreshing to hear a record that hits you right away. *Basic Function* hits you. It's not some methodical record. It's one- to two-minute, monotone vocals, staticky, fun, punk rock, that makes you wanna get up and pogo. –Ryan Nichols (Super Secret)

NIP DRIVERS: *Destroy Whitey:* 12" EP
One of my all-time favorite albums, the Circle Jerks' *Group Sex* LP, is only fifteen minutes long. The fact that a record that short can mean so much continues to fascinate me. *Destroy Whitey* is considered an EP, but at eleven minutes, it's downright insane how much it packs in. This reissue of it isn't the first, but it's the prettiest so far. Housed in a gatefold sleeve, it includes a poster, lyric insert, digital download, and colored vinyl. The band's lack of political correctness wasn't really what made them so distinguished, as there were other assimilated hardcore acts treading similar waters in the 1980s. It was the easy-flowing, flawless blend of snotty vocals and fantastic hardcore riffs that made them a keeper. Hardcore doesn't get much catchier than Nip Drivers. Kudos goes to Slope for repressing this classic, along with the other records in the Nip Drivers catalog. Now is as good a time as any to revisit this truly essential record. –Art Ettinger (Slope)

NIP DRIVERS: *Oh Blessed Freak Show:* LP
Given what a fossilized coot I am, and how much of a tuned-in cat I imagined myself to be back in the '80s, I find it hard—and just a tad embarrassing—to believe that *I never*

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really listened to the Nip Drivers before this. The only Nip Drivers song I remember hearing back in The Day was their cover of "Fox on the Run," and I generally tended to confuse them with Australian band Mental As Anything (they had a song called "The Nips are Getting Bigger") as often as not. Weird. Past transgressions notwithstanding, this release of their 1985 album has that certain unpredictable *je ne sais quois* that Southern California punk albums tended to have, for better or for worse, from the mid-'80s on out, beginning with a three-minute Olivia Newton John cover, and filling out the remainder of side one with eight more songs, none longer than 1:25, averaging precisely sixty seconds a piece (yeah, I measured). Side two deposits six more sub-two-minute tracks for starters, and concludes with a four-minute-plus instrumental. Tossing out the two statistical outliers, the main body of work here sounds not unlike what White Flag might have sounded like had they never matured to the point of *Wild Kingdom,* crossed with some of the Vandals' poppier chops circa 1990—heck, even throw in '90s ex-pats Gigantor and upstate '80s contemporaries like Fang into the mix and break into bite-size cubes and there ya go. *Drive on, you crazy nips!* BEST SONG: "E.Y.O.B." BEST SONG TITLE: The same, once you realize it stands for "Eat Yourself Out, Baby." FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: This band drew The Gargoyle from *Incredible Hulk* #1 on their master tape box! –Rev. Nørb (Slope, sloperecords.com)

NODS, THE: ***Chromatic Recollections:*** **7"**
This is totally nervous, angular, melodic, and garagey. In short, this freaking rips. My only complaint is both songs are fairly short. Every time I put this on, I don't even sit down 'cause I'm changing sides so often. That, my friends, is the mark of a great single. Totally recommended. –Garrett Barnwell (Hail Atlantis)

NOTHING BAND: ***Close to the Past:*** **CS**
Collection of sound collages that honestly just succeeded in stressing me the fuck out. If nothing else, a worthy exercise is dismantling what constitutes a "song." –Keith Rosson (24/7 Tapes)

OLDER THAN DIRT:
Discography Part 01 1990-1993: **CD**
Excellent compilation of single and compilation tracks from Southern England's Older Than Dirt. A variety of recordings and bridging styles of hardcore, but most of this falls in a SSD and Gang Green-meets-Insted, or even Chain Of Strength, for that matter. Fans of those shouldn't waste any time on this and grab it. Yet another solid Boss Tuneage reissue. –Steve Adamyk (bosstuneage.bigcartel.com)

OMEGAS: ***Power to Exist:*** **LP**
I imagine a lot of folks have been waiting on this follow-up to their *Blasts of Lunacy* LP. Those who were waiting with baited breath shouldn't be disappointed, as this record comes from a very similar place. References to the first two Warzone LPs are still pretty accurate, but this record has more of a damaged vibe to it than their earlier LP. It's good to see a band progressing without totally abandoning the sound they perfected earlier. Something about it still feels referential but not really in a way that cheapens it, just in a way that you can tell they were listening to the Germs when they wrote this record. There are moments that are a little *too* familiar in songs like "Deep or Wild" that give you that eerie feeling of not quite being able to "put your finger on it," but those moments are few and far between and act as sort of a breathing moment in the otherwise total whirlwind of the music here. The only real weak part of the record is the vague lyrical content, but I mean… it's a hardcore record from 2016. Do people even read lyric sheets anymore? –Ian Wise (Beach Impediment)

ON THE CINDER:
The Fight against Ourselves: **LP**
Technical and tight, On The Cinder offer up melodic hardcore with a splattering of pop punk tendencies. There are plenty of gang vocals, as well as heavy double bass pedal beats. At times, it's a bit indulgent. These guys don't push an overtly metal sound; in fact there's a tinge of post-punk guitar, which separates them from the fray. The record is full of dystopian lyrics and has a rad little zine insert with vibrant artwork. –Camylle Reynolds (Between The Days)

PEARL CRUSH: ***"First Blush" b/w "Semiprecious Stone":*** **7"**
With headphones on and the lights out, I fall down the rabbit hole. This single somehow illuminates the whole room, washing over me with its goosebumps-inducing dream pop. Multi-instrumentalist Mandy Clinton performs triple duty—vocals, guitar, and keys—while Kirke Campbell holds down the groove. Clinton's confident vocal melodies shimmer, even when the chorus pedal is stomped. The contrast between "First Blush," with its lushness of The Cure, and the B side's distorted guitars and sparse arrangement demonstrate Clinton's range; this single is evidence that a full-length is the logical next step. Let these two songs hold you over. –Sean Arenas (Poison Moon)

PERIPHERIQUE EST: ***Ring Est:*** **12" 45**
Not a word of heathen English crosses the lips of this flirtatiously-monikered Brussels band, who deliver six songs of sublime garage with occasionally accelerated tempos hearkening back to the bouquets whiffed from only the finest casks of KBD swill, sometimes gently spritzed with staccato tambourine banging or two-finger piano. Wait, they use the English word "GO!," as well as "Sammy," which I suppose is Japanese. Those particular deviations notwithstanding, I always

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NEW DOUGS
STOKED
New Dougs: Stoked
Formed by two long time friends of the label, NEW DOUGS is an infectiously catchy NEW WAVE / PUNK duo from CHICAGO with ties to SIG TRANSIT GLORIA, THE BROCKMEYERS, and ETERNAL FLAMES. STOKED is a 7 song diverse and matured melding of all the aforementioned bands yet a refreshing extension sure to produce much more excellent material in the future.
BARREN
COUPLES
Barren Couples: S/T
Long time friend of label Scott Thomson (ex - CHICAGO THRASH ENSEMBLE, IRON REMINDERS, LITTLEMAN COMPLEX, LETTERBOMBS, and WAYOUTS) is back with more music...this time in the form of a solo noise project. BARREN COUPLES debut is a 4 song collision of sounds that we like to describe as AMBIENT CHILL NOISE... possibly the appropriate soundtrack for sitting alone in a dark basement while ignoring your family. Too harsh?
COMING SOON
100% uncertainty

knew that once the Francophones could be convinced to start singing in French, leaving the half-assed attempts at speaking English to the Americans (who can't be expected to know any better), the world would be a far more excellent place. Clearly, Utopia is ours for the taking these days! This record makes me want to pogo stiffly with a comically exaggerated overbite. *None can ask fairer than that!* BEST SONG: "Amoureux d'une Merde." BEST SONG TITLE: "C'est Go!" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Although the record was released on an American label, the spine, aggravatingly, reads down-to-up. –Rev. Nørb (Modern Action)

PHANTOM HEAD: Self-titled: LP
Although Phantom Head wants you to nod until your neck gives out, mine was left with only a dull ache. Their spiraling, fuzzed-out riffs echo Melvins and Pissed Jeans, but there isn't enough meat on the bones. The production is thin—damn near demo quality—making the riffs face-warming, not melting. Similarly, the droning vocals are buried and often feel like an afterthought, while the drums and bass lack a wallop. Phantom Head is clearly a solid band, but this LP leaves a lot to be desired. –Sean Arenas (Blak Skul, blakskul.bigcartel.com)

PISS TEST: *EP3: 7"*
Piss Test are from Portland and fall somewhere between *Killed By Death* punk and every other band from Portland. There are some cool moments in here. I like the swapping male/female vocals and the mastering on this record is so loud and full that it's easy to get distracted by the positive qualities, but the songs are pretty impossible to follow and the guitar leads—which are of the gloomy, simple PDX school—feel weak compared to their contemporaries. I feel like I might be more into this record if it included a lyric sheet so I could at least follow along with the lyrics—which are near impossible to discern under all that reverb—but, in the end, this thing is just kind of a dud. –Ian Wise (Jonny Cat)

QUAALUDES:
Are the Winners Always Losers?: 7"
Fuck, I love this 7". Quaaludes are doing riot grrrl ala *Pussy Whipped*-era Bikini Kill with a Bay Area twist that's short, fast, and urgent. Really smart writing; the raw and pissed tracks jump right at you. Seriously, check this out. –Candace Hansen (Johnny Cat)

RASH: *Skinner Box:* LP
Largely mid-tempo hardcore that occasionally foray into thrashier—and Black Flag-inspired dirgier—climes. Lotta feedback pumped in to dirty up the sound of something that's already pretty punishing. Nice work. –Jimmy Alvarado (High Fashion Industries)

RATS FROM A SINKING SHIP:
Self-titled: CD
A punk band fronted by a rapper named Alex Lusty, which is pretty much what this sounds like—slow to mid-tempo punk with political lyrics occasionally delivered with a hip hop cadence. In the end, it's not terribly exciting, though I dig large chunks of the positions taken in the lyrical content. –Jimmy Alvarado (Girth, girthrecords.com)

REMAINDERS: Self-titled: LP
Remainders, from Pittsburgh, Pa., blitz through ten tracks of introspective pop punk. Although I'm struck with déjà vu because I'm reminded of the gruff melodicism of Dowsing, Great Apes, and The Tim Version, Remainders benefit from an enviably precise rhythm section and heartfelt vocals that demand a response. The dual vocalists complement each other—one a barrel-chested growl, and the other a higher octave yell that recalls At The Drive-In. Admittedly, Remainders aren't totally for me; there's little new brought to the crowded genre, but I can think of at least ten people who will love this record. However, "Trying Too Hard" is the clear MVP. I can't get that damn song out of my head; I can see the room at The Fest erupting during the opening notes. –Sean Arenas (A-F)

RHDP: *Silinyador: 7"*
Four tracks of bluesy bar punk, with all the lyrics in Tagalog! Slow, stomping drums, dirty guitars, Sabbath-style riffage. The vocals have a dogged, ranting quality that pushes this closer to street punk at times. Together, RHDP and a free translator website have just taught me how to say "King of the Road" in Tagalog. That should give a pretty good idea of what this sounds like, overall. –Indiana Laub (Tension Head,tensionheadrecords@gmail.com, tensionheadrecords.bigcartel.com)

ROMAN CANDLES: *Blacklist the White Kid in Blackface:* CS
When I listen to Christopher Gordon (aka Roman Candles), I'm transported to a specific time and place: I'm seventeen years old, strumming a shitty pawnshop guitar in a punk house half-filled with crusties and college dropouts. Gordon has performed only moments before me. He was brave enough to sing, in his plaintive vocal trill, achingly sincere songs about growing up in Yorba Linda, while I couldn't at the time muster the courage to write lyrics that actually meant something. All of these years later, Gordon still percussively strums his guitar and belts straight from the heart. And I'm still envious. "The Suburbs" is the song I've always wanted to write about growing up in a cookie-cutter neighborhood. "Thanksgiving Break" is painfully honest, tackling sex, drinking, small talk, and the emptiness of longing; while "Mike Love" is a cover of a Merry Christmas song—you know, the greatest indie rock band you may never get to hear. A world without Roman Candles cassettes is a world I don't want to live in; I only hope I can continue to find a working player. –Sean Arenas (Self-released, fuckthestowaways.blogspot.com)

SANCTION THIS: *Wipe Us Out:* 7"
Yup, I'm pretty sure this band is pure evil. Sanction This sounds a lot like if Gwar shed their histrionics but kept their penchant for spitting/shitting on Jesus. The bass player's thudding notes hit your skull like a heavy, blunt object, while the singer's baritone snarl and call to "Sanctify Genocide" awaken your inner demons. I'm not even religious, but I feel like I need to say a few Hail Marys after listening to this EP. And the fact that Sanction This can make me feel like a seasoned lapsed Catholic after one listen is a testament to how good they are. Definitely would recommend buying this 7", but only if you're cool with going to hell. –Simone Carter (Grow Your Own, anthrax_uk@hotmail.com, anthraxuk.bandcamp.com)

ŠANOV 1: *On the Shit:* LP
2017 finds this Czech band celebrating thirty years of existence. Originally released in 1992, this is a reissue of their second LP. Dramatic and theatrical vocals pair with driving, somewhat straight-forward punk riffs. Pretty bizarre at times, like a revved up Toy Dolls influenced by early U.S. hardcore with some Jello-isms thrown in for good measure. Not sure how many times this will get thrown on the turntable, but its history is undeniable. If you're interested in Czech punk/hardcore, and you haven't heard this record: check it out. –Daryl (PHR, info@phr.cz)

SELF DEFENSE FAMILY: *Colicky:* 12" EP
Still sticking with the lurching, atmospheric post-punk they're known for, this four-song EP doesn't necessarily tread any shocking new ground for the band, but shit if they aren't good at what they do. Sure, the lyrics are frequently corny ("I'm here for a good time / Conversation and dinner / I'm gone once it's over / I disappoint most people."), but the music. *Dang.* The music is just dense and sparse all at once, simultaneously ethereal and gritty. Somewhere between the worlds-deep drone of Lungfish and the sonic and emotional acrobatics of an (admittedly lesser) Fugazi. Fire hasn't been discovered here, but it's being healthily maintained. Nice work. I'm convinced. –Keith Rosson (Iron Pier)

SETE STAR SEPT: *Beast World:* LP
The insanely prolific noisecore duo of SSS unleashes forty-five more blasts of wound-up noise upon the listening public (housed in fantastic art from Rudolfo da Silva). Slightly more musical than someone like Sore Throat, but not too much. Think of the music as a drill that just goes at you, in blasts under a minute. The first side is, more or less, straightforward noisecore, whereas the second side is sort of like low grade free jazz with just drums and vocals. The drums bang and clang. Sometimes there's a groove and they both will lock in together over a chant of "cocksucker" or a sputtering and stuttering "You Fucking Dick!!!" Noisecore fans will laps this up. Everyone else will shake their heads in bewilderment. I go back and forth about noisecore, but with the fucked up mess of a world these days, I find putting this on helps shut out the bullshit a little more. Noisecore is sometimes sublime when the outside world is just obnoxious noise. –Matt Average (SPHC)

SHIVAS, THE: *"I've Had Enough" b/w "So It Goes": 7"*
Lo-fi, stoney pop music from Portland, Ore. You could have fooled me. The Shivas sound like a sun-soaked Burger Records band. Both songs are slow to mid-paced jams that nod to the '60s but land somewhere in the clouds of 2017. Get stoned. –Ryan Nichols (Casino Trash)

SKINNY GIRL DIET: *Heavy Flow:* LP
I'll save you a stupid joke about how this is the only diet I've ever stuck with and get to it; this band is important. Loud, full, staticky-yet-borderline-melodic, ass kicking London punk by three women of color who are all younger than I. (And I'm still on my parent's health insurance.) Political, radical, and strong, Skinny Girl Diet fight white patriarchy, systems of oppression, show bros, fuck boys, creepers, and stereotypes of WOC in the music world, with crashing drums, raw screams, and droning guitars. This album captures the rage women and femmes are conditioned not to display. The anger that boils in you when men stand a little too close, stare a little too long, or shout to you from their cars. The fury fueled by being groped at a show, followed to your car, or being physically boxed out of a space. This album is for every time a man has cut you off with an, "Uh, well," or talks over you with an "Actually…" After a few listens, you begin to hear the sheer craft and mastership working hard behind the initial noise wash. *Heavy Flow* is an ungentle reminder that femme-shaming isn't punk. Starting an intersectional feminist rock band with your sister and cousin at age twelve is. –Griffin Wynne (HHBTM)

SLICING GRANDPA: *Low Vibrations:* LP
Weird, sparse, experimental noise with a menacing bass line that borders the raw edge of Chrome, but it's also just a mélange of strange musings and basement brooding, with some songs more art house than punk. It's bizarre and I can't help but like it. –Camylle Reynolds (Self-released)

SONIC AVENUES: *Disconnector:* CD
On Sonic Avenues' newest full-length, the band ventures into a much more (dare I say) mature songwriting approach. The Avenues' soaring melodies I grew fond of have been toned down a bit in favor of an overall less poppy-sounding album while retaining their tightness and sophistication. In drumming up comparisons, I came up with the Buzzcocks meets the Psychedelic Furs and I stand by that assessment.

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Although I do have the vinyl version, I've spent a little more time with this album in my car's CD player. You know you're listening to a banger when you don't skip any of the tracks and let the album play over again. –Juan Espinosa (Dirtnap / Blow The Fuse, blowthefuserecords.com)

SPEEDBILLY: *Hold Our Beers and Watch This:* CD
If one were to gauge from a look at the cover and band name, it would appear that we are in for some hot rod core that will likely pull from Zeke and Supersuckers. First song is called "General Lee." I do not think there is any chance it is not referencing the *Dukes of Hazzard* TV show. Sure enough, the sound is in the Zeke/Supersuckers/Nashville Pussy arena. No surprise there. This was never really my style, but, I suppose, I have heard worse. –Mike Frame (Self-released, speedbilly.bandcamp.com)

STADIUM WAY, THE: Self-titled: *7"*
Tacoma's The Stadium Way is not a band I would seek out and, no surprises here, I can't say they're a band I particularly enjoy. The sound is a bit too... well… as a '90s sitcom parent may have said: "Why does he sing like he has marbles in his mouth?" That being said, it does what it is trying to do (grungy, angsty, acoustic) just fine. I appreciated the final track, "Shadows," most of all. The organs were great. If you're also not into this style, check out Noi!se which lent two of its members to this project, displays more talent, and leans more punk than grunge. –Nicole X (Self-released)

STALE PHISH: *Pole Jams:* CD
Snotty, in-your-face skate punk from Detroit. No joke about the skate punk part. Almost every song is about skateboarding. Did you know that if you're a skateboarding redneck, you're a radneck? It's true. And rollerbladers still suck. These party dudes clearly live by the board and die by the board. But it's not all party. There's an underlying theme of growing old and sticking with what you love that flows through a lot of these songs. "There's No Easy Way" addresses the loss of friends along the way. "Lifer" covers the concept of compromising and taking a day job but still skating bowls at night. The surface level party makes this disc worth a listen. The depth makes it a keeper. –MP Johnson (Not Like You)

STALINS OF SOUND: *Biology Museum:* CS
Yay! A new release from my favorite electro-punk commies from San Diego! This time, a limited-edition cassette! For the uninitiated, The Stalins engage in some pretty serious punk rock and aren't afraid to throw some electronics in the mix. The nearest comparison might be The Spits, but that isn't really accurate or fair. Two thumbs up for continuing to push punk rock in places rarely travelled, gentlemen. –Garrett Barnwell (Volar, volarrecords.com)

STARS APART: *Under the Bunker:* CD
Second full-length from this Philly four piece. I'm hearing bits and pieces of The Replacements, Guided By Voices, and Bob Mould. The songs are structured to lodge in your brain and never come out. That's a good thing with so many bands fighting for real estate these days. "Brilliant Bird" pulls off the trick of melting the sound of R.E.M. with The Smiths. One of the guest players is credited with playing an "Aquapuss." I guess it is an effects pedal. This isn't punk, but it is well played and memorable. It will slide into my collection with ease, not too far away from my stack of releases by The Stills. Seek this out. –Sean Koepenick (Self-released)

STEVE LIEBERMAN THE GANGSTA RABBI: *The King of Jewish Punk:* CD
I don't think I've ever heard anything like this. Steve Lieberman the Gangsta Rabbi is a one-man band, and on *The King of Jewish Punk* he plays alto, tenor, and bass trombones, a two-string left-handed guitar, right-handed basses, flutes, mangal vaddya, bombard, melodica, and beat machines. There are also songs with titles as "Jewish Boy in the Mosh-Pit," "Punk-Rock Chanukah" and "We're All Derek Jeter." This has got to be heard to be believed because it's kind of all over the place, as though some traditional Jewish music met Wesley Willis and some guy who has a one-man punk rock garage band. –Kurt Morris (Self-released, gangstarabbi.com)

STICK MEN WITH RAY GUNS: *Property of Jesus Christ:* LP
Stick Men With Ray Guns were an infamous Dallas punk band whose notoriety was founded on wild stage performances. Such antics were largely courtesy of lead singer Bobby Soxx, whose patently offensive lyrics, coupled with instigating fights with audiences and finding creative places for microphones, complemented the virulent, almost tribal dirges the rest of the band meted out. The band's in fine, fucked up form on this live recording. Either a mediocre board tape or a really good audience recording, the band plows through a caustic set bookended by two of their best-known tracks—"Christian Rat Attack" and "Learn to Hate in the '80s"—with pretty much everything in between falling along the same lines, with Soxx peppering abuse and the band grinding effectively along, refuting their reputation of front-loading their sets with new songs they hadn't yet practiced. Those not easily offended with a yen for Texas punk history will find this of particular interest. –Jimmy Alvarado (12XU)

SUEVES, THE: *Change Your Life*: LP
These guys sound seriously wound up. The music is garage punk as interpreted by a much groovier Electric Eels, fronted by Chris D's illegitimate hell spawn. The whole thing has a taut quality, like any minute they're gonna just snap and take out the first fifteen rows of whatever show they're playing, but in the meantime ye just gotta sit

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and revel in the rockin' they're puttin' in. Thumbs definitely up. –Jimmy Alvarado (HoZac, hozacrecords.com)

SURPRISE VACATION:
***Stealing Office Supplies:* LP**
I was excited to see this full-length, since I really enjoyed these guys' self-titled 7". The artwork is very retro and inviting. They have an updated version of "Surprise Vacation" on here which is so catchy that I can't look at these guys' name without it getting stuck in my head. If you love beach punk like The Crowd, The Stitches, Smogtown, Posh Boy Records, or Portland bands like Autistic Youth and Red Dons, you need to familiarize yourself with this band. –Ryan Nichols (Our Damn Selves)

SUZARDS, THE: *Pour Votre Santé, Écoutez the Suzards: 7"*
Poppy French punk with a lo-fi aesthetic that I could imagine dudes who enjoy tradition, wearing nice coats in warm weather, and going to shows just to smoke cigarettes on street corners will really like. –Candace Hansen (Barbella Club)

TEAR THEM DOWN: *Abide:* CDEP
Judging from the art, I really expected this disc to be a typical "tough guy" rendition of modern American melodic hardcore. Luckily, that's not the case. TTD are an energetic, catchy skate punk band in the vein of classic Burning Heart Records. Go figure—from Gothenburg, to boot. Poppy, yet far from whiney. As much as it pains me to say it, this records *does* sound like *Tiny Tunes*-era Millencolin. If someone had told me they were on a much bigger label, I'd believe it. –Steve Adamyk (Morning Wood, morningwoodrecords.com / Plunk)

TENEMENT RATS: Self-titled: 7"
This six-track album sounds like the perfect soundtrack to a late '70s backyard rager. If you love dancing at shows, L.A.-based Tenement Rats has you covered. I definitely got a sassy, garagey Jay Reatard meets The Bananas vibe from this 7" that features members from Radiohearts and The Gaggers. There's some sweet guitar shredding, especially on intro song "Free to Make a Jail." Closing song "Cold War Shithole" finishes off the party with the same intensity as the rest of the tracks. –Cynthia Pinedo (No Front Teeth)

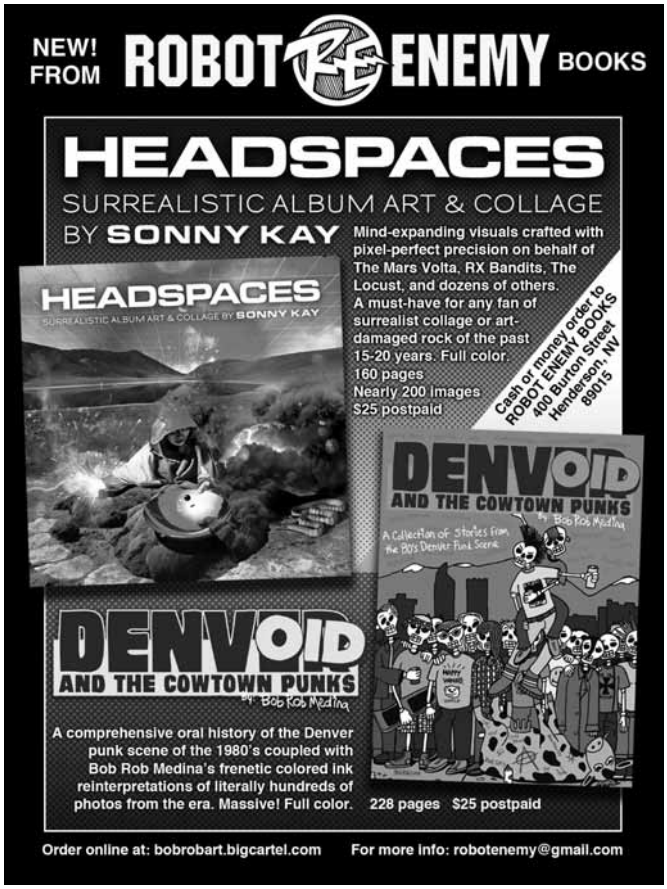
TERMINALS, THE: *Uncoffined:* LP
A reissue of this New Zealand supergroup's debut, originally released on Flying Nun in 1990. Tunes are a potent potpourri of primarily post-punk and '60s psych, all gloom and jangle in the best ways. Really know fuckall but the basics about these cats, but they definitely deliver(ed) the goods here and have inspired this punter to hunt for more of their oeuvre. –Jimmy Alvarado (HoZac, hozacrecords.com)

TIGER HELICIDE:
***Saturday Night Mind Control:* CD**
This is the kind of music your parents thought (feared?) that Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris were listening to leading up to Columbine. It is dark, angry, and violent music. The songs are about drugs, axe murders, suicide notes. Maybe they think they're emulating the Misfits or the Cramps, but they are so badly missing the mark. I've been listening to horror punk for over fifteen years and I never actually thought that Danzig was going to turn into a monster. Even Cancerslug (also from Alabama) writes songs that are more tongue in cheek than this. These guys are a little too close for comfort, and it doesn't help that the music is not very good. I mean the lyrics for one of the songs starts off with, "I chopped off your head / now you're deader than dead / you started to smell / so I said what the hell." What the fuck is this? The last song on this record is over nine minutes and is a meandering, confusing mess. They say that music is therapy, but I think these guys actually need the real deal. –Kayla Greet (Murder Boy Music)

TOMS, THE: *Fake Christmas: 7"*
Normally I'm a total Scrooge when it comes to Christmas songs, but The Toms' *Fake Christmas* is actually quite nice. Written, produced, and performed by Tommy Marolda (hence The Toms, get it?) "Fake Christmas" was originally laid down on 2004's *Classic Christmas Songs with a Dash of Pepper: St. Nick's Christmas by the Lonely Hearts Band.* As catchy as it is unorthodox, "Fake Christmas" ain't gonna be your grandma's new favorite carol. Jangly guitar riffs instead of jingle bells, and some sweet Steely Dan-esque harmonies instead of a cherubic choir? Hell yeah—take that, Santa. The real standout of the EP, however, rests on the B side. Even though it was first recorded in 1985, "It's Needless (Demo)" is a total XTC-inspired banger of a jam, and is my vote for best B side cut of the year. Buy this as an ultra-belated Christmas gift to yourself! C'mon, you deserve it! –Simone Carter (Frodis)

TONTON MACOUTES, LES: *Dinero: 7"*
Catchy, growly, rock'n'roll comin' straight outta Valencia, Spain. Heavy Euro punk vibes; think GBH producing a psychedelic garage rock band. Perfect for a ten-minute dance party pregame when you wanna feel tough and cute but not dangerous. –Candace Hansen (I Shit In The Milk)

TRIAC / SICK/TIRED: Split: LP
Triac's got a severe grindcore thing going on, making some solid noise for a three-piece. Tight, mid-tempo stuff, save for a few blastbeats and the droning, doom-heavy dirge at the end that went on so long I had to make sure the record wasn't skipping. Sick/Tired sounds similar, if a little faster. Powerviolence? Sure, and complete with the requisite Cookie Monster Dude on vocals. Nice thing about them is that either he—or someone else—also screams ala Feral Porcupine Guy/Guy That Very Occasionally Sounds Like Blaine From The Accüsed, so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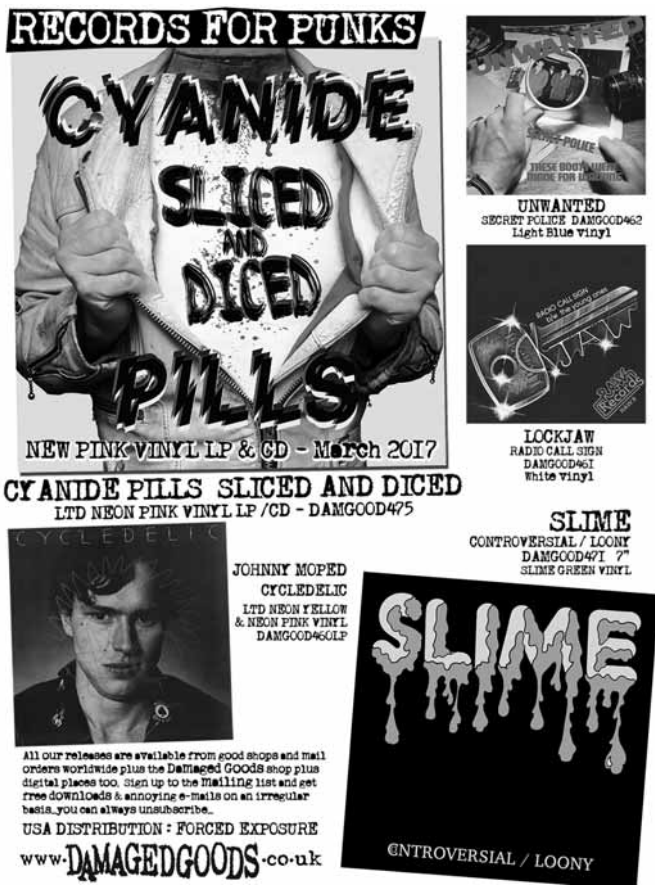
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that's cool. Both bands are certainly competent at what they do, and the production and packaging is solid and fucked up. I mean, nothing about this record is personally really *fun* or *enjoyable*, but maybe whipping my tender skull into stroganoff is more the point. –Keith Rosson (To Live A Lie)

T.S.O.L.: *The Trigger Complex:* LP
First new full-length from this band in over eight years. Initial reaction on the street has been mixed. Some have thought it is not punk enough. But this band can't keep making "Fuck You Tough Guy" over and over. Bands have to move their sound forward or it grows stale. This record does that while keeping true to their roots. The keyboards are pretty up front in the mix for sure, but that doesn't take the edge off. If you give this more than a quick listen, I think you will be rewarded. "Strange World" and "The Right Side" really show the band going for it and succeeding. I really don't know how anyone can hear the chorus of "I Wanted to See You" and not think this is some of the band's best work. Yes, I love the classics too. But when they tour on this record, I want to hear a healthy chunk of this one, too. –Sean Koepenick (Rise)

T-TOPS: *Face of Depression:* 7"
Pittsburgh aggro-masters, T-Tops, go to great lengths to project the image of beer-swilling, bellbottom-sporting, porn-mustachioed men's men, caked in grease and glistening under the sweltering summer sun while getting their Trans Am back in working order. *Don't believe their lies.* Patrick Waters, Jason Jouver, and Jason Orr are black-t-shirt-and-jeans-clad music nerds just like the rest of us. No, there's no arena rock to be found here: T-Tops play crushingly loud, sludgy noise that could make even the most jaded among us search for a sledgehammer to smash everything we own. The sonic assault of their four-song *Face of Depression* EP—which features two bonus songs if you download the digital version—rarely lets up. They could have called the record *Songs to Punch Your Dad to*, and no one would have questioned them. "Dead Magician" stands out as the most alluring track on the record proper—slamming into you in the pit and harking back to Nirvana at their most "fuck off"—but T-Tops are perhaps at their most punk on the digital track, "Girl Who," which seems far too fun, rowdy, and delightful to be relegated to the bonus bin. We all seem to have more than our fair share of rage to exorcise these days, so big ups to T-Tops for this thoroughly cathartic collection of ragers. –Kelley O'Death (Self-released, t-tops.bandcamp.com)

UCHAZIM: *Fragmenty Vasni:* LP
Uchazim are a long-standing hardcore punk band from the Czech Republic. This release incorporates metal-tinged hardcore with lots of unpredictable time changes and some almost grungy punk moments to create something that's often perplexing in its multifariousness. It jumps from a spoken word piece to a thrashing punk sound to technical metallic hardcore seamlessly, and while it's all executed very well, it ultimately suffers from being too all over the place. –Mark Twistworthy (PHR, info@phr.cz)

UNWELCOME GUESTS: *Anything You Want:* CS
I really enjoyed their 2010 album *Don't Go Swimming,* and *Anything You Want* finds them tilling some pretty familiar ground: it's not quite punk, but it's a little too toothy to be labeled strictly as indie rock. And as always, there's Micah Winship's warbling, high-pitched, earnest vocals over it all. Maybe a less wholesome, busted-orthodontia version of the Weakerthans? Or an indie sockhop where someone's spiked the punch? Solid. –Keith Rosson (Dirt Cult)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *D-Sides:* LP
As I recall, the original conceit of Modern Action's *D-Sides* series was that it showcased tuneage from some great bands culled from dicey sources, such as rehearsal recordings and such. Dunno how many actually made it out into the world—I may be wrong, but I only remember coming across one 45 and it was pretty rough—but this compilation is pretty goddamned good. You get for your buck assorted demo tracks from Modern Action, The Briefs, Amoebas, Smogtown, The Bodies, Sharp Objects, The Stitches (the only track here pulled from a rehearsal tape), Modern Pets, Ruleta Rusa, Complaints, The Cadavers, and Botox Rats, all of which are A-side tunes with great sound, making for a comp that easily stands up to the great comps their Southern California label compatriots, Hostage Records, have put out over the years. Also comes with a zine featuring a page dedicated to each band. Great, great stuff to be found here. –Jimmy Alvarado (Modern Action)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Frequency of the Truewave 2:* CS
A cassette compiling the strength of several formidable DIY bands, mostly of the punk and post-punk variety. While half of the bands on this comp reside in the Bay Area, it is definitely not a regional comp with a few international bands (Shopping, Troika, Lie, Naive) as well as Austin (Crooked Bangs), Portland (Steel Chains), Chicago (Split Feet), and D.C. (Priests) being well represented. Standouts include Street Eaters (a personal fave), Mozart, Troika, No Babies, Priests, and Violence Creeps but, really, every song is a winner. If you threw out your walkman or shelf system decades ago (or never had one to begin with) there is also a digital version that you can find through the label's website. I mention that only because this is an extremely good group of bands and songs that deserves to reach as many ears as possible. –Juan Espinosa (Nervous Intent, nervousintent.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Kind of Funny, Kind of Strange: the* only *Donnie Darko Companion Tape:* CS
Donnie Darko celebrated fifteen years of being released, and to commemorate, this one hundred copy special edition cassette tape and zine combo came out. My copy arrived with a Post-It Note containing a handwritten declaration: "Seventeen of the world's foremost cutting edge artists cross the edge and cover songs from the edgiest soundtrack to the edgiest film ever made." Minimal punctuation, maximum impact. It also came with a tiny magnifying glass that I was puzzled about until I saw the teeny tiny credits on the back. These covers (some multiple) pay homage to the soundtrack that influenced the teen years of some of my friends. Morus Alba's modern take of Duran Duran's "Notorious" is really fun, and Free Cake For Every Creature's cover of "Love Will Tear Us Apart" is a very sweet acoustic rendition of a classic. Other notable covers are Dodge Dirt's version of "Mad World," and two covers of Tears For Fear's "Head Over Heels," including a really beautiful version with a backing orchestra by Meaner Pencil. This tape is a really cool collector's item. Bonus points for all proceeds after shipping (and earnings from the digital version) being donated to Black Lives Matter Upstate. –Cynthia Pinedo (Bee Side Cassettes)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *The Glastonbury Grove EP: A Tribute to Twin Peaks:* 7"
It's hard not to love something that pays homage to this singularly eerie, trailblazing David Lynch show. Named for the part of Ghostwood National Forest where Twin Peaks' most exclusive—and evil—club resides, this tribute compilation features seven hilariously unsettling tracks and original art by Albert Gray. Noisy weirdos Mr. Clit And The Pink Cigarettes kick off the party with "Dead Daughter," a lean, raucous love letter to Miss Laura Palmer herself. Tennessee's Badge Collector are up next with "Into the Fire," a driving headbanger with nods to illusive owls and everyone's favorite log. With "Baguettes, Brie, and Butter," J.R. Fisher & Jacob Pflanzer drive the production deep into the Pacific Northwestern soil with a high-masc hard rock track about Twin Peak's shadiest, sleaziest residents. Washington D.C. "sitcom-core" duo, The Electric Grandmother, offer up "Leo Got Shot," a spacey electronic track recounting the woes of the titular new shoe-obsessed young man. "Baked at the Double R" gives James Dean Death Cult the opportunity to slow things down with an acoustic jam relating the harrowing tale of a young delivery boy who has never seen *Twin Peaks* but must try to understand *Fire Walk with Me* while super fucking high. Avant-garage foursome DANA keep the nightmares rolling with "Death Bag," a groovy standout track that perhaps best evokes the disjointed, unnerving quality of the original show. Finally, wrapping up the album—in a translucent plastic sheet—is soloist American Male Giant Squid, who turns in the sense-assaulting "Twin Peaks Theme," a chilling evocation of what it must be like to look into a mirror and see Bob staring back at you. <<shudders>> *Fuck* that. –Kelley O'Death (We Used To Drink Together/ What's For Breakfast?)

VHS: *Gift of Life:* LP
Finally a full-length from this band! Alienation, nostalgia, cold weather, seamlessly produced, post-punk rock music you can relate to from one of the best band in the Northwest right now. –Ryan Nichols (Suicide Squeeze)

VICIOUS CIRCLE: *Circle of the Doomed:* 7" EP
Hot on the heels of the reissue elsewhere of this venerable Australian hardcore unit's first two albums comes this, their first demo cassette from 1984 given the vinyl treatment. The tunes are true to their time, with nary a whiff of metal to be found anywhere, topical lyrics, and an overall sound that that tempers speed with stomp. Also included alongside the demo's original three tracks is another tune culled from a 1985 demo. –Jimmy Alvarado (Not Like You)

VICIOUS CIRCLE: *The Price of Progress / Reflections:* 2 x LP
Subtitled "The History of Australian '80s Punk/Hardcore Volume One," this is a reissue of this Australian hardcore unit's first two albums, originally released in 1985 and 1986, respectively, on the Reactor label. *The Price of Progress* is very much along the lines of what would likely be called "street punk" today, largely mid-tempo tunes with thrashy bursts peppered in here and there. *Reflections* shows some more sonic sophistication (and possibly some GBH influence) creeping into the batter, with the tempos becoming both more varied and nuanced and frequently more frenzied, by turns. Both albums are very much of a time when bands who'd survived global punk/hardcore's earlier days began experimenting a bit with the formula, yet in this case still maintaining a foothold in their original sound. Nice to get reacquainted with these cats, who it appears remain active and productive. Definitely recommended. –Jimmy Alvarado (Power It Up)

VIOLENCE CREEPS: *The Gift of Music:* LP
This is one of those albums where the phrase "plodding repetitiveness" is a good thing. Solid, dry guitar punk with moments of Flipper-inspired anarchy—the kind of punk that doesn't rely on distortion for noise. This is a winner for fans of early L.A. punk. "Back and to the Left" is a real sloppy, catchy stand out. –Billups Allen (Total Punk, floridasdying.com)

WARHORSE, THE: *Chubs:* CD
Ten-track CD of self-described "Silver Lake Synth Punk" which seems a little light on the punk, if you ask me. My ears hear an amalgamation of late-'80s electronica and some '90s darkwave

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mixed with some twisted, soulful vocals. It's not bad at all—maybe a little cutesy for a jaded fuck like myself—but I can see the kids (You goddamn kids!) eating this up like it was a four dollar donut. –Garrett Barnwell (Kill All Music, killxallxmusic.com)

WARHORSE, THE: *Chubs:* LP
According to the label website, this would be classified as synthwave (apparently that's a genre). To be blunt: I found this to be unlistenable. Combining the computer-generated beats of electronic "music" with the cheesiest elements of '80s pop music does not make for something my ears and brain can tolerate. –Chad Williams (Kill All Music, killxallxmusic.com)

WARSONG: *Control:* LP
Hoooo doggy, where to begin with this? Rock-solid, powerful tuneage outta Zaragoza, España. Building from a rock base, they serve up eight tracks of grade-A anthemic punk rock that sometimes echoes classic era Wipers. It's dark and up to its neck in hooks and single note guitar leads that will bore into your noggin and have you humming while pumping a fist in the air. Looking for the soundtrack to the world's current state of affairs? Here ye go, kid. –Jimmy Alvarado (Dirt Cult)

WAYWARD, THE: *Plutonic:* LP
The first thing that instantly comes to mind is Scratch Acid and Jesus Lizard, due to the heavy percussion, predominance of bass, and the pained vocals. The riff for "Sandstorm" is relentless! It comes at you hard and fast—bass and drums punching it out, pausing quickly to access the damage—and then getting right back to it. The songs are wound tight and executed with precision, making me think these guys must log hours away in the practice room. The structures are a little more complex than usual, and they sometimes veer into jazz territory, but never get bogged down in technique, choosing to focus instead on putting bruises on the listener's skull. Just check the opening to "C Sharp" with its opening that bashes and mangles away. So good. –Matt Average (Nerve Altar, nervealtar.blogspot.com)

WEAD, THE: *"By the Whey" b/w "And I and She": 7"*
These two songs were unearthed from an acetate by a customer at Used Kids Records in Columbus. It's one of those golden stories. Just when you thought you had run out of '60s. Both songs are ratchet turners with "And I and She" exercising some excellent vocal harmonies. Essential if you're into Crypt comps. –Billups Allen (Slovenly)

WOODBOOT: *Black Piss: 7"*
This 7" from Brisbane-based Woodboot is pure punk perfection. Scratchy, dirty production really lends a hand to the EP's two totally sweet singles with equally sweet titles (lookin' at you, "Black Piss" and "Into Your Skull"). Crank this EP, chug a tallboy, and break shit in your living room until your neighbors complain. Take a quick breather, then do it all over again—Woodboot would approve. –Simone Carter (Total Punk, totalpunkrecords.bandcamp.com / Floridas Dying, floridasdyingrecords@gmail.com, floridasdying.com)

WOODBOOT: *Krang Gang:* LP
Solid dose of garage punk that's sloppy but not so much so as to miss the point or ruin the fun. Songs are catchy, well executed, and pogo-urging. –Jimmy Alvarado (Neck Chop, facebook.com/NeckChopRecords)

WORN LEATHER: *Tape Three:* CS
Worn Leather brings the riffs. They make garagey rock that recalls the Stooges and the Ramones in equal measure. It's loose and raw but also catchy without being saccharine, a pleasant intermediary between punk and indie rock. Truly a tight tape. –Lyle (Reflective Tapes)

WORSE: *Rubber Burner:* LP
Dark and dirgy. Grinding sludge that recalls many—Cows meet Unsane meet Flipper?—but manages to stand on its own tootsies. There's a complexity to the songs' structures and delivery, and they occasionally pick up the pace to maybe a solid gallop, but for the most part they keep things slow, caustic, and gloriously bleak. –Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

WVRM: *Heartache:* LP
The cover of this record is a skeleton holding an hour glass in a cave with its head framed in a golden halo. I only mention that because it sounds exactly like the cover looks, which is actually surprisingly rare. Wvrm are from somewhere (I'm going to guess one of the Carolinas) and play heavy grind with some very brutal, very dissonant breakdowns. The music skews heavily to the metal side of the genre. The production on the drums is crystal clear and the cymbal hits on the blast beats are something to be envied, but they can overpower the rest of the band during some of the slow parts. The guitars play perfectly-in-tune out-of-tune riffs and the vocals are shrieks. This is a solid, quality release all around. –Ian Wise (To Live A Lie)

YACOPSAE / ZZZ HACKER: *Am Enden Des Alphabets:* Split 7" EP
Yacopsae: Markedly restrained from some of the high velocity ultracore they've released previously, this is nonetheless prime German thrash—feral, fuzzed, and fucked up. ZZZ Hacker: German hardcore that varies in speed from mid-tempo to gallop. They do what they do well, but it's almost a letdown following Yacopsae's aural assault. Should've listened to 'em first. –Jimmy Alvarado (Power It Up)

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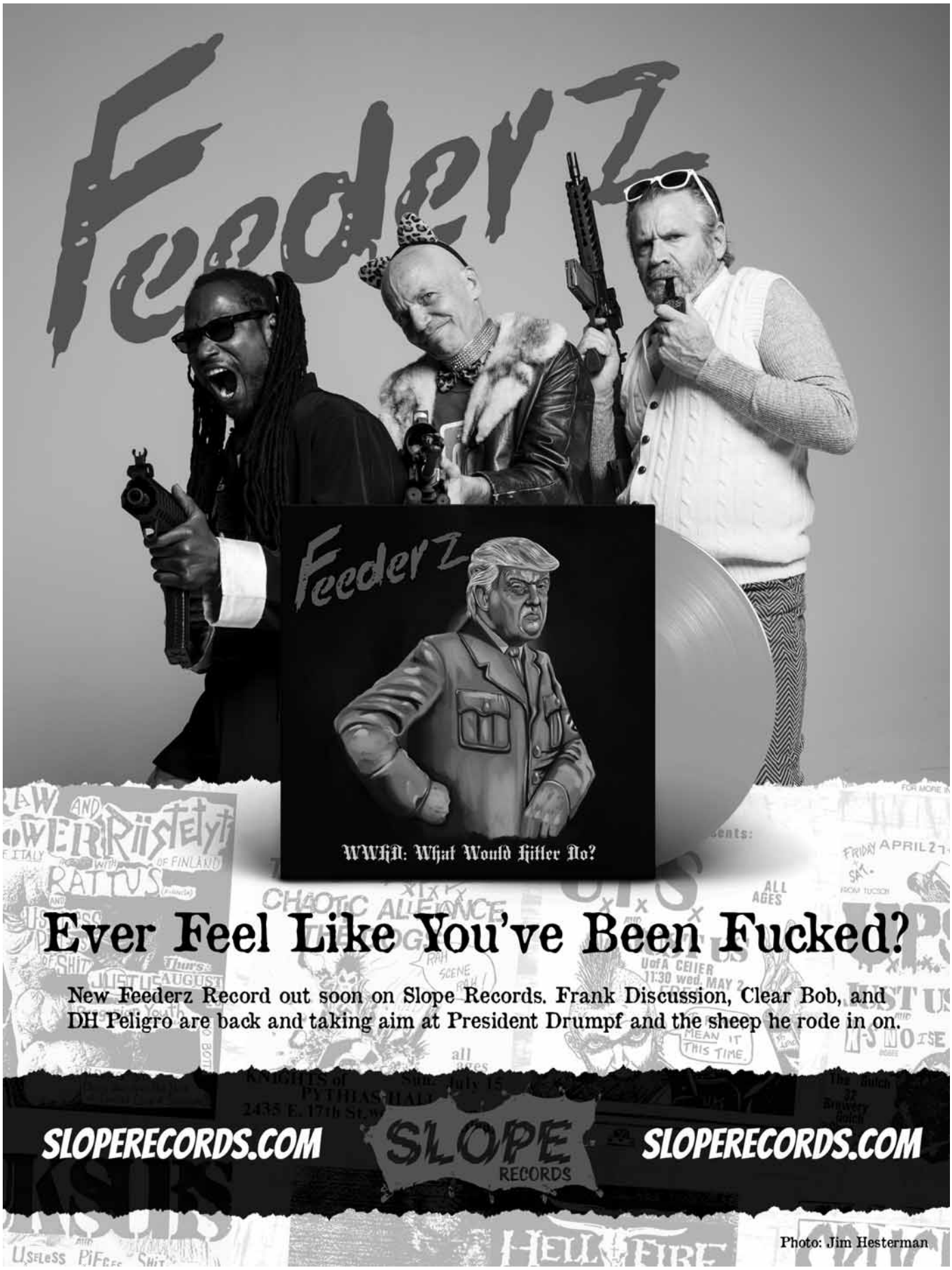
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to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue or recently posted on razorcake.org.

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• **Almost Ready,**
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• **Banquet,**
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Surrey, KT1 1EE,
United Kingdom
• **Bcore,** C/ Montmany, 25,
08012 Barcelona, Spain
• **Beach Impediment,**
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• **Between The Days,**
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Pittsburg, PA 15216
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• **Bird Attack,** 1213
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Beach, FL 32250
• **Boss Tuneage,**
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• **Certified PR,**
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• **Deranged** c/o Gordon
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• **Dirt Cult,** 7930 NE
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• **Dirtnap,** 5857 SE Foster
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• **Evacuate,** PO Box 2511,
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• **Get Better,** 8 Waco St.,
Greenville, SC 29611
• **Girth,** PO Box 13,
Geneva, NY 14456
• **Gunner,** PO Box 1205824,
28058, Bremen, Germany
• **High Fashion Industries,**
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• **Hip Kid,** 2020 N
California Ave., #276,
Chicago, IL 60647
• **Hostage,**
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• **IFB,** 4447 Saint Clair Ave.,
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• **Iron Lung,** PO Box
80172, Seattle, WA 98108
• **Iron Pier,** 564 54th St.,
Brooklyn, NY 11220
• **Jonny Cat,**
PO Box 82428,
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• **Katorga Works**
c/o Material World,
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Brooklyn, NY 11237

• **Kidnap Music /**
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Luisenstrasse 49, 66606 St.
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• **Killjoy,** Postfach 301141,
04251 Leipzig, Germany
• **La-Ti-Da,** 1850 Mallard
Dr., Courtenay, BC, V9N
8M2, Canada
• **Lockjaw,**
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GU2 9NJ, United Kingdom
• **Mighty Mouth Music,**
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V6B 3Y6 Canada
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• **Neck Chop,**
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• **No Friends,**
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• **Obeah,**
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Bakersfield, CA 93301
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• **Rare Plant,**
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Madison, WI 53704
• **Reality Is A Cult,**
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• **Rise,** 15455 NW
Greenbrier Parkway, Suite
115, Beaverton, OR 97006
• **Six Weeks,**
225 Lincoln Ave.,
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• **Slope,**
11430 N. Cave Creek Rd.,
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PO Box 204,
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• **Suicide Squeeze,**
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• **To Live A Lie**
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***Cherry Blossoms* proves that a life spent making noise just might make a life well spent for someone else.**

–Sean Arenas
CHERRY BLOSSOMS IN BLOOM

AMERICAN DREAM, THE #3, $3 or trade, 5½" x 8½", copied, 20 pgs.
The first line of the second page sums up *The American Dream* nicely: "I'm forty-five years old and I'm angry." This piece is printed in the fashion of so many other anarchist zines. It follows the collage format made punk-legendary in albums by the Dead Kennedys and Crass. There are upside down flags and horrifying pictures of animals being tortured. A smug-as-fuck Donald Trump stands in between an American soldier and a hooded member of the Ku Klux Klan. There is an image of glassy-eyed children standing for the flag and a veteran in a wheelchair missing three limbs. Even graphic designer John Yates' *Officer Friendly?*—a classic image in the anarcho punk community—makes an appearance. There are criticisms of Monsanto and an image promising "Solidarity with Standing Rock." My intention here is not to knock the work. I agree with so much of what is being put forth here. In my darkest moments, this zine is reflective of my own worst fears about the world. *The American Dream* can be one hundred percent right in its condemnation of the world and still may very well, though it would be a shame, end up unread on the free zine rack of your local coffee shop or DIY venue. My best hope for a radical zine like this is that somewhere, an energetic group of people are sitting down to discuss it together because it opens their eyes to new possibilities and means for destroying everything fucked up about this world. Fuck Donald Trump and Steve Bannon! Fuck the alt-right! Fuck the deportations and scapegoating of vulnerable people groups! –Jon Mule (The American Dream, 102 Richmond Dr. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106, notlikeyouzine@gmail.com)

AMERICAN DREAM, THE #3, $3 or trade, 8½" x 5½", copied, 20 pgs.
If I understand correctly, this issue has been twenty-two years in the making. It's basically an unfiltered channel for the author's general rage and defiance—against war, capitalism, racism, animal cruelty, and most of the other usual suspects. There are lengthy excerpts from lyrics by Agnostic Front, Cro-Mags, H2O… some more of the usual suspects. It's pretty simple, familiar stuff. The essays aren't particularly organized and a lot of the pages aren't much more than haphazard collages of political memes. This is the first political zine I've read during the Trump administration, so fuck it. I, too, have often been consumed by inarticulable rage, and I have probably already used a lot of the same lines as this writer in Facebook arguments with my dad. Not too sure about that quick mention of chemtrails on the second page, but I get the general idea. Fuck it. –Indiana Laub (The American Dream, notlikeyoufanzine.com)

BEHIND THE WHEEL: FROM UBER/LYFT TO TAXI #3,
$5 ppd., 5½" x 8½", saddle stitch and glossy cover, 60 pgs.
In this third volume of *Behind the Wheel*, our author/driver has gone from Uber, to Lyft, to now taxi driver. This series is an inside look at what it's like to be a Bay Area driver. We meet passengers seeking drugs, sex—and more often than not inebriated—and mistaking the poor taxi driver as a Lyft or Uber. I especially loved the guest stories from "Late Night Larry" because they involved either passengers who puked and had to pay up (a hundred dollar fee!) or wanted to have sex in his car, to which he seemed okay with either? The life of a cab driver doesn't seem like something I'm brave enough to take on, but I certainly appreciate those who can do it, and the craziness that they encounter every day! –Tricia Ramos (Behind the Wheel, 4730-A Shattuck Ave., Oakland, CA 94609, kellydessaint.com/piltdownlad)

BLACKPOOL ROX II #11, £2, 8½" x 11", glossy, 18 pgs.
Another sharp-looking issue from this U.K. fanzine. As with the last issue, #11 strikes a cool balance by covering a lot of nationally and internationally relevant bands but tying almost everything back to the local Blackpool scene. The first couple pages jump right from a brief interview with the legendary Cock Sparrer to a lengthy conversation with local riot grrrl band The Poly-Esters. On the non-punk front, there's a short account of a Blackpool woman's experiences in Saudi Arabia as well as an extremely drunk, extremely British, nearly incomprehensible journal of a trip to France taken by a group of kinda gross football guys, from what I can decipher—not really sure of the point of that one, to be honest. Rounding out the issue are a couple other band interviews, and some record and zine reviews. Not bad! –Indiana Laub (Blackpool Rox Towers, 16 Windmill Close, Blackpool, FY3 0EB, United Kingdom)

CHERRY BLOSSOMS IN BLOOM,
$4 or trade, 5 ½" x 8 ½", copied, 40 pgs.
In this comics zine, Chris Kill documents his pilgrimage to the Young Street Bridge, a mecca for Nirvana fans, as Cobain spent some time there in his youth and may have in fact lived there for a stint. Before his trek as an adult to Cobain's hometown, Kill recounts his teenage obsession with Nirvana, echoing my adolescent experience with punk: buying bootleg CDs, reading countless biographies and zines, arguments in high school about what band is better. There's a refreshing lack of pessimism in his panels. For example, in finally arriving to Aberdeen, Wash., Kill experiences a near religious experience: "Something definitely touched my soul." He returns home euphoric. From start to finish, *Cherry Blossoms in Bloom* is an engrossing slice of life zine, with minimal artwork that recalls Ben Snakepit. At once uplifting and relatable, *Cherry Blossoms* proves that a life spent making noise just might make a life well spent for someone else. –Sean Arenas (Chris Kill, 11051 Grassyglen Dr., Houston, TX 77064)

CONTESTED GROUND #2, £1.50, 5½" x 8½", copied, 38pgs.
Here we have a compilation zine put together by some British punk dudes who are nerding out on football, hereafter to be referred to as soccer. Each chapter is a different punker's take on the sport. What did I learn? These guys drink a lot of tea. Meat pies are the official unofficial snack of English soccer fans. Teams have clubs and clubs have special bars. But maybe you're like me and you know nothing about planet earth's most popular sport. If so, you might be a bit lost among all this talk of "footy" and "gadgie" and "porkless pie." What's in it for you? I liked *Contested Ground* best when the writers fall deep into their subject and start getting a little whimsical. One guy asks his "granddad" about the sport and what it meant to him, and granddad says that soccer is like theater: "You get the actors, you get the audience, you get the involvement, [and] it lasts for days." Is this maybe the only known literature for soccer punks? If that's your thing, enjoy. –Jim Joyce (cgzine.blogspot.com)

EMERGENCY EXIT #2, £2, 5½" x 8½", copied, 27 pgs.
Our author, Ben Smith, who normally lives in Leeds, writes about cycling around Europe as a way of beating the blues. Along the ride, Ben thinks about ways to live off the grid because, "Entering the church of work to pay bills—that would be a failure." I'm not sure if Ben lands on any definite plans for independence, but don't fault a guy for trying. It brings up some fun asides, like the note about his friend, Greg, who "once lived on a canal boat in London for free. He did hate it, and the boat sank, but that free shelter is possible." Mostly, *Emergency Exit #2* felt like a travelogue. This happens and that happens. He meets some people—some are nice, some are boring. If I were planning to bike Europe, I'd recommend reading Ben's zine to get a lay of the land, to channel a bit of his exploratory spirit, and to get some practical advice about packing. It's fun to hear him ruminate on the materials of the journey. He says to pack whatever feels right. Don't let people pester you into leaving this or that tool—if it gives you piece of mind […] it will literally be a talisman." –Jim Joyce (B/W & Read, bwread.blogspot.co.uk)

FLAG DAY, $3, 5½" x 8½", copied, 12 pgs.
Rick V., Emily Timm, and Ben Snakepit all share the same birthday—June 14 aka Flag Day (apparently this is also the birthday of King Diamond, Donald Trump, and Boy George, among others—but their birthdays are not chronicled here). This is a comic zine focused solely on random birthdays in each of the three artists' lives. A very quick, fun read. –Cheyenne Neckmonster (Rick V, 1423 S. Lincoln St, Bloomington, IN 47401, itsmerickv.storenvy.com)

FRANCESCA, $?, 5½" x 8½", copied, 32 pgs.
Francesca is an unstapled, half-sized zine by Sean Dunne. It starts cold and fast: a stream-of-consciousness meditation on being really, really fucked up on speed and meeting someone named Francesca. The story takes up about twenty-two pages with some collages and quotes to fill out the rest of the space. I was surprised that Dunne's writing has depth and brutal honesty about addiction, dysfunction, and desperate attempts to connect with other humans. –Cheyenne Neckmonster (No address listed)

FREAK TENSION,
$6, 5½" x 8½", copied with gloss full color cover, 42 pgs.
For more than ten years, author MP Johnson has been writing bizarre short stories, weird fiction, and creating made-up biographies for bands he's reviewed. This zine compiles some of his favorite summaries, stories, and pieces that his freaky brain has created. From mutants to amphibian humanoids, each short piece of fiction is more and more bizarre. Seemingly endless, this author shows no sign of slowing down with *Freak Tension.* –Tricia Ramos (Freak Tension, freaktension.com)

I SAID THAT VOLUME 1: THE DICKS, $?, 6" x 9", book, 92 pgs.
This bound zine chronicles the band, The Dicks. Written by singer Gary Floyd himself, this first volume is one part of a four-part series. A self-proclaimed "loud-mouth punk rock queer," the Texas born singer's musical life is documented. Starting from the idea and creation of the band, interviews through out time, scans of old show flyers, live photos, and lyrics to Dicks songs, this zine is a quick and thorough introduction to Gary Floyd, his music, and his presence as a musical force to be reckoned with. –Tricia Ramos (I Said That Volume 1: The Dicks, leftofthedialmag@hotmail.com)

INFLATABLE CATECHISM, THE, $5, 8½" x 5½", copied, 16 pgs.
This chapbook, a collection of Giovanni Garcia's short poems, has a feeling of slight unease and obscurity to it, from the anatomical heart-balloon chimera on the cover to lines like, "They dirty white linen clothes as they kneel in the thick, / Naïve on All Saint's Day of the pyres fed here." The language can be a little purple at times, but that's a hell of an image (no pun intended). In style and topic it's all somewhat scattered, but, as the title of the collection may suggest, the theme threaded through many of these poems is faith—its purity, its distortion, its violence. Angels and crusaders and burned witches gather here, so watch your back. –Indiana Laub (Space Cowboy Books, spacecowboybooks.com)

LOAFING THE DONKEY #78, $4, 7" x 8½", copied, 48 pgs.
Zines with a heavy regional focus are very much in my wheelhouse. This issue of *Loafing The Donkey*—which I've never seen before, despite its long-running status—fits the bill. In addition to reviews, this one documents the scuttlebutt surrounding an unreleased documentary on Memphis's Antenna Club, and a batch of anti-town watch initiative posters which take an approach to activism that *Razorcake* readers will appreciate. –Michael T. Fournier (2264 Elzey Ave., Memphis, TN 38104-2455)

"Entering the church of work to pay bills—that would be a failure."
EMERGENCY EXIT #2

MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL #402, $4.99, 8½" x 11", offset, 120 pgs.
I haven't checked in with *Maximum* since the nineties, when both *HeartattaCk* and *Punk Planet* started in reaction to *MRR*'s coverage of what was (and wasn't) punk. Columnists bickered, sniping about slights, real or imagined—it was all too much after a while. Now, twenty years later, *MRR* feels much more unified than I remember—rather than divisiveness and genre definition, *MRR* celebrates DIY culture in what feels like a gathering of tribes. The template is the same—columns, interviews, reviews—but the vibe is much more inclusive. This issue features Ian MacKaye and archivist Nichole Procopenko on archiving Dischord's massive collection of punk effluvia. After reading this issue, I subscribed: I can't think of a better endorsement. –Michael T. Fournier (MRR, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146, maximumrocknroll.com)

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL #403, $4.99, 11" x 8½", offset, 104 pgs.
Been a long time since I've read this zine, and maybe it's the fact that this is an all-China issue and it was a bit tough tackling and assembling purely international contributions, but this issue seems a little thin. Maybe this is just the page count they're at these days? The usual suspects: columns, reviews, ads. Also scene reports from Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Wuhan, and Beijing. Interviews with Subs, Diders, Demerit, and a collection of earlier Chinese scene reports from the *MRR* archives. Wonderful to see folks still publishing this magazine decades later, and especially pushing non-American stuff. –Keith Rosson (PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146-0760)

MINIMUM ROCK + ROLL #4, $3, 5½" x 8½", copied, 8 pgs.
When I saw the title of this zine, I was hoping it would be a spoof of *Maximum Rock'n'roll,* but it was not. Instead, I found a short zine that consists of a short interview with the Olympia, Wash., band Bad Sleep and a short number of short reviews. I would've rather seen another two or three interviews and that amount more of reviews. Even if it would've taken a little longer for the zine to come out, I think it would be worth it, especially for the price. That being said, I liked the

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handwriting that served as the font for the zine, but I'm going to have to take a pass on this issue. –Kurt Morris (acornersoul@hotmail.com)

NEW WAVE CHICKEN #5, $5 ppd., 5½" x 8½", copied, 72 pgs.
New Wave Chicken is a fanzine loosely focused on chickens and music. Being a fan of chickens from the get-go, I was prepared to be into this zine after reading the first guest essay entitled, "The Art of Naming Chickens" by Jackie Carr. The rest of the zine chronicles stories in the zine author's life where a hardcore band or album played a pivotal moment, then an interview with a member of said hardcore band. Interviews included are with members of A State Of Mind, Mustard Plug, Raw Power, The Instigators, Ruin, and Iconoclast. Interspersed are a few other guest essays on their hardcore experiences, but the main bulk of this issue are the interviews. My favorite part, however, was a random dedication page to a chicken named Flopsy, "The greatest hen I've ever hugged," according to the author. RIP Flopsy. –Tricia Ramos (New Wave Chicken, PO Box 880081, Pukalani, HI 96788, brokelegdog@hotmail.com)

NO FRIENDS #4, $6.50, 8½" x 11", newsprint, 128 pgs.
I hadn't heard of *No Friends* before, but it seems to have been started by former *Maximum Rock'n'roll* contributor, Ray Martinez (aka Ray Suburbia). It's a typical newsprint rag in the vein of *MRR* and has the same format: interviews, columns, and reviews. There's also a flexi-disc with songs by Jami And The Debt, Tenement, Dyke Drama, and Endless Column. Interviews include Tenement, The Peterbaugh Sisters, Lemonade, and The Leather Archives and Museum (which was a very cool read). One complaint I had was that the columns were scattered throughout instead of in one specific section of the zine and the titles of the columns were at the bottom of each page. Every column looked similar—it would've been good to have titles at the top and to provide some kind of illustration or header unique to each. There are some in-depth, worthwhile conversations happening in *No Friends* as well as very cool photos in the reviews section—it's obvious the folks putting this together know what they're doing. A little tightening up of the layout will make this thing aces. Regardless, it's still worth picking up if you're a fan of *Razorcake* or *MRR*. –Kurt Morris (PO Box 12343, Chicago, IL, 60612)

NOT NECESSARILY THE NEWS #5,
$5, 5½" x 8½", copied, 34 pgs.
This issue of *Not Necessarily the News* is primarily composed of two interviews with two Ralphs: Ralph Rivera of The Bug and Not Normal Tapes, and Ralph McGreary, an author of fantasy novels. I've seen way too many zines like this where the interviews would have been short and lacked any depth. In this situation it's quite to the contrary: Jim's questions are thoughtful and natural, seeming to make each interview into a regular conversation—very similar to something you'd read in *Razorcake.* Jim also has a few pages on his life as a teenage street punk and essential records from that time in his life. If any of this sounds like it's up your alley, I'd certainly recommend this issue of *Not Necessarily The News.* –Kurt Morris (Jim Gies, 2020 N. California Ave. #276, Chicago, IL 60647, hipkidrecords.storenvy.com)

PUNK ROCK GLEE CLUB #2,
$5.00 or trade, 5½" x 8½", copied, 64 pgs.
Liz (who works at the venerable and crucial Quimby's, in Chicago) sings a capella versions of punk songs in the Blue Ribbon Glee Club. The first installment of this zine was about that club's exploits; this one broadens its scope a bit. In addition to profiles of BRGC members and an article on England's similarly inclined Hackney Secular Singers, Liz includes song-specific essays written as part of the club's singing/reading series (examples include X's "The World's a Mess, It's in My Kiss" and the db's "Black and White"). Friendly and well-conceived throughout, despite an admittedly niche topic. But we all know niches make for the most compelling reading, right? Right! A complete joy. –Michael T. Fournier (Liz Mason, PO Box 477553, Chicago, IL 60647)

SCAM #10, 25th Anniversary Issue,
$8 ppd., 8 ½" x 11", offset, 160 pgs.
I've been a fan of Erick Lyle since the days when he went by the name Iggy Scam. Back then—twenty-five years ago, as this issue's masthead declares—he was the living embodiment of a Blatz song, fucking shit up whether pushing a boombox playing "Damaged" around Miami in a shopping cart or providing schematics for stealing electricity from lampposts. Erick's matured since those days, certainly, but his insurrectionary spirit and joy for life still burn white hot at this issue's core. Erick still writes on gentrification, graffiti, squatting, and police, but the scope of his interviews have widened: in addition to talking with/about the Pleasure Leftists and Shellshag, Lyle covers members of the lit scene like CA Conrad and Daphne Gottlieb. I treat the arrival of this zine like a national holiday, dropping everything to dig in (and at 160 pages, it's a long holiday). Viva *Scam*! –Michael T. Fournier (1011 Bedford Ave. #3, Brooklyn, NY 11205, onthelowerfrequencies.com)

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–Michael T. Fournier | SCAM #10, 25th Anniversary Issue

SCAM #10, 25th Anniversary Issue,
$8 ppd., 8 ½" x 11", copied, 160 pgs.
I've only read back as far as issue #9 of *Scam* in which Eric Lyle did a badass history of Black Flag's *Damaged*. It read like a more exciting *Thirty Three and a Third* series books and it cost a lot less. I was lucky to see Lyle read at Quimby's earlier this winter while he was touring for a book he'd just edited, *Streetopia*, which is more or less about how cities treat their DIY art scenes like absolute shit with one hand while opening the door to the Googles and Twitters and other digital empires with the other. Anyway, in person and on the page, Lyle's a funny, self-effacing conversational genius, and this 25th anniversary issue feels like a well-attended zine-party jammed with all his pet interests and best friends pulled from all corners of the punk landscape. What's good? I enjoyed that juice about fake Greyhound tickets, the piece on Coffee Not Cops, and the interview with visual artist Edie Fake, which takes place in the desert where Fake lives, and during which Lyle and Fake discuss the ghostly qualities of bars and clubs that live on in the mind after their physical representations have been razed away. What else? There's a Ramones Reiki inspirational art piece by Fly, perfectly sized to be a cutout bookmark or daily affirmation card to place at your desk. I wanna live, I wanna be well, I wanna you to read this. –Jim Joyce (onthelowerfrequencies.com)

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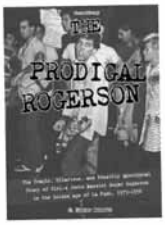

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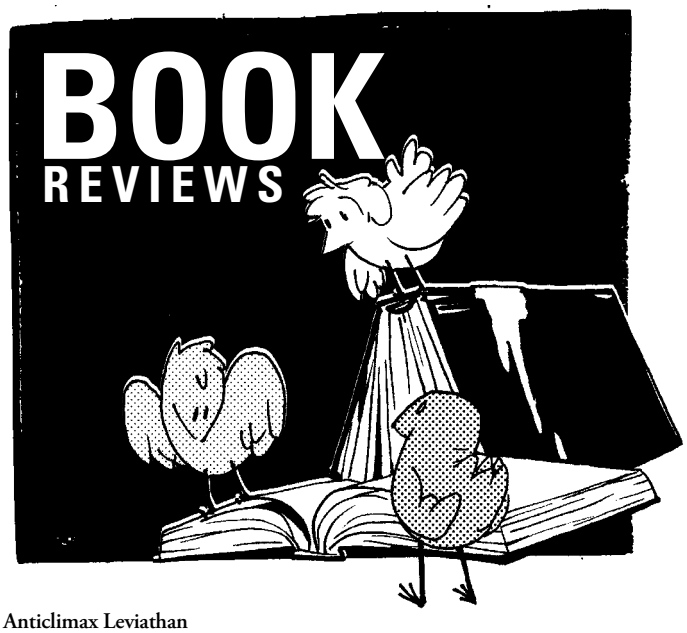

Anticlimax Leviathan
By Ryan Bartek, 418 pgs.

Author Ryan Bartek (AKA Quixxxote, AKA Filthpimp, AKA GhostNomad) starts *Anticlimax Leviathan* with this epigraph: "There are only three things to be done with a woman. You can love her, suffer for her, or turn her into literature." I'll start my review by saying there's only one big thing I can say to you about this book, which is not to read it. But you'll want a synopsis, so here goes.

Ryan Bartek, who starts referring to himself in the third person after a couple chapters, is a dude from metropolitan Detroit. He grew up in a bleak, blue collar neighborhood. He worked shitty jobs. Listened to a lot of black metal, had some wild lovers, zigzagged across the country, like a Greyhound Kerouac, and ended up stopping in New York long enough to lead a parade of Occupy Wall Street folks across Brooklyn Bridge into a wave of "Darth Vader cops," who he confronts "alone."

What happens in between is a lot of hellish bus terminal purgatory shit, scheming performance art pieces like "free therapy," and telling stories about traumatized women who've disappointed him in one way or another. Bartek's a thirty-something year old man, but when he writes about the ladies, he sounds like a crybaby seventeen-year-old singer from some Victory Records group. One choice instance—it's part of a list he's written—involves his ex, Jezzi. He's annoyed Jezzi can't date him anymore after she's been abducted and gang raped. In his words, "she could never deal with it and left me for Jesus." Poor Bartek!

Other classic Bartek moments: he refers to himself as one of "the blackest white men [he] knows" but he also owns a "Fuck Eminem" shirt. He mentions writer Henry Miller ten times in a three-page spread, but insists he has "no influences, only kindred spirits," and I guess it's true. At its best, Bartek's prose is zany and hyperbolic. Here's a shortlist of his phrases that might be used as alternate book titles: *Puppet of My Own Wretched Miasma, Withered Gasoline, Cataclysmic Shift of Alienation, Façade Sarcophagus, Garbage Dumps and Opera Houses, Vacant Rubber, Stomping Phantasm, Clownbaby, Horde the Abuse*. At its worst, I just wonder if he could ease up on the syllables and get on with his blessed story.

Anyway, Henry Miller, back to him. Miller wrote some great sentences. They manage to sparkle through his tedious misogyny. And sometimes you just have to sigh and shrug because he was a Bro Writer living in a time when treating women like shit was all part of the plan of "turning them into literature," and blah, blah, blah. But it just doesn't work like that in the 21st century, especially if you're selling yourself as a progressive punk and the tip of the Occupy Wall Street brigade. No thanks. –Jim Joyce (Anomie Press, bigshinyprison.com)

Big Bosses: A Working Girl's Memoir of Jazz Age America
By Althea McDowell Altemus, edited and annotated by Robin F. Bachin, 192 pgs.

Althea McDowell Altemus was an executive secretary for several employers across the eastern half of the U.S. during the late 1910s and the 1920s. She wrote of her professional experiences in an unpublished memoir discovered by her grandsons and donated in 2012 to a museum. Decades before the establishment became a museum, it was an estate that employed Altemus.

Her main goal was to write of various behind-the-scenes intrigues (usually with pseudonyms), but along the way she offers fascinating glimpses of what life was like for women in early twentieth century America. Employers, for example, generally only wanted to hire single, childless women—Altemus was a divorced mother and lied a lot to stay employed.

The writing is usually pretty good. If I came across it in an online article published this year, I'd keep reading. Here's the opening paragraph: "Neither beautiful nor dumb I had received my first assignment as private secretary to the world's oldest and wealthiest bachelor playboy." But here's the opening sentence of the next paragraph—which I'm not critiquing, mind you—it actually makes this rich historical document even more entertaining: "With the mature judgment of twenty lovely summers and fewer winters, fortune had come my way following three years of the now elapsed matrimony which bequeathed unto me a tiny liability of the stronger sex."

Recommended for readers of American and women's history, as well as for those who loved the narrator's voice in Charles Portis's novel *True Grit.* –Jim Woster (The University of Chicago Press, press.chicago.edu)

Cursed In Cairo
By Chris Clavin, 224 pgs.

Most of us have a dream about starting a small community of our own, away from scene politics and the well-beaten paths of a familiar place. This first-hand account from Chris Clavin tells the story of a very small group of determined people who attempt to build their own community from scratch.

In plain language, this book recounts the reality of ghost-town life and shows how capitalism has truly and irreparably failed middle America.

–Cheyenne Neckmonster | *Cursed In Cairo*

Chris Clavin is probably best known for his involvement with Plan-It-X Records and a variety of folk-punk bands from central Indiana. In 2010, he convinced a few of his friends (and a few strangers) to move to Cairo, Ill. to create a punk utopia in a blighted, forgotten river town. He buys a huge, dilapidated building, which becomes their home. The ground floor is transformed into the Ace Of Cups, a coffee shop and ad-hoc community center. It seems too good to be true and as the name of the book will tell you, things pretty much go downhill from there.

In turns hilarious, strange, and heartbreaking, the account is organized by months and reads like a diary. The piece follows explorations of what's left of the town and encounters with the people who live there. The building has a mind of its own and nature is slowly reclaiming crumbling buildings left and right, but Clavin refrains from romanticizing Cairo's urban decay. The punks and townies reach an uneasy peace, though they don't seem to reach a true understanding of each other's motives for being there.

Having lived in my share of shitty, small towns and run-down neighborhoods, I could relate to the routine problems of surviving in a place without a real grocery store or a laundromat, and the quiet frustration resulting from being deprived of social opportunities. In plain language, this book recounts the reality of ghost-town life and shows how capitalism has truly and irreparably failed middle America.

Despite the city's curse and Clavin's quixotic quest for punk paradise, this book reveals much about the power of hope and idealism

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and the harshness of reality when it comes to crash the party. –Cheyenne Neckmonster (Secret Sailor Press, PO Box 2312, Bloomington, IN 47402)

Hybrid Moments: A Literary Tribute to the Misfits
Edited by Sam Richard and MP Johnson, 170 pgs.

I love horror. I watch an average of two to three scary flicks a week, not to mention the amount of gleefully, gross fiction by Joe R. Lansdale, Brian Keene, and Richard Laymon that populate my library. For these reasons, the Misfits will always be one of my favorite bands (well, Danzig's Misfits, not the Michale Graves/Jerry Only embarrassment). With songs like "Vampira," "Astro Zombies," "Halloween," and the eponymous "Hybrid Moments," Glenn Danzig—in all his meat-headed glory—has soundtracked my cherished nightmares.

In this short story anthology, editors Sam Richard and MP Johnson have corralled several writers to concoct gruesome tales inspired by the New Jersey progenitors of horror punk. More than a clever idea, this is downright brilliant! Publisher Weirdpunk Books has also released a collection of stories inspired by GG Allin, and I hope they keep it up.

As with any short story anthology, the results are eclectic. I went in expecting pulp in the vein of EC Comics and *Creepy*—short spine-chillers with twist endings—but the majority are grounded and lyrical narratives covering a reporter obsessed with a murderess, a woman compelled by skulls to kill, an antisocial television junky harboring a dark secret, and a fictionalization of Patty Hearst's abduction by the Symbionese Liberation Army. For example, José Cruz's "American Gods, American Monsters" and James Edward O'Brien's "La Caja" are suggestive and altogether less splatterpunk, more atmospheric horror. T.A. Wardrope's "The Soft Remains" reads like an unpublished tale from Clive Barker's *Books of Blood*—visceral Lovecraftian terror soaked with arterial spray. Matthew Vaughn's opener "Exterminate the Whole Human Race" is an inventive take on mindless flesh eaters, while Nicholaus Patnaude's anti-narrative "Static Imago," which reads like Burroughs mutated by Pynchon, is the most bizarro and divisive in the collection; its cut-up style is a definite mindfuck.

Sure, there is the occasional disembowelment and severed head, but such violence begat introspection. Nothing is cheap or illogical, a pitfall for many genre anthologies, and the stories are consistently entertaining throughout. I highly recommend this book for those who land in the horror/punk intersection of the Venn diagram, and for those who like a little yuck for their buck. –Sean Arenas (Weirdpunk Books, $15, freaktension.com)

Sure, there is the occasional disembowelment and severed head, but such violence begat introspection.

–Sean Arenas | *Hybrid Moments: A Literary Tribute to the Misfits*

Punk Avenue
By Phil Marcade, 246 pgs.

If you're anything like me, you've probably bought and re-bought several crucial books you've loaned out to friends. *Please Kill Me* is one that's always made its way back to me, but is worse for the wear of passing through so many hands. I felt the urge to re-read it a few months back after Marc Maron interviewed authors Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain. The book remains a highly entertaining and disturbing read, crucial for any punk fan.

I almost missed Phil Marcade's anecdotes amongst the tales of Iggy Pop, Wayne County, Debbie Harry, and the rest of the original crew. Marcade's anecdote about meeting and summarily shooting up Nancy Spungen is a memorable one, but more because of Nancy than him. Similarly, Marcade's band the Senders played with all the nascent scene's heavy hitters but have none of the notoriety of their contemporaries—they're not a canonical band despite having been there.

Punk Avenue is Phil Marcade's recollection of his years in the scene for Three Rooms Press (which, in the interest of full disclosure, have released two novels I've written). The book starts *in media res* with his 1972 Arizona drug bust, stopping in Los Angeles and Provincetown before landing in the veritable Chelsea Hotel in 1974, as the New York Dolls play the Mercer Arts Center and the Ramones begin gigging at CBGB's. Marcade's stories are crisp and well told throughout, often hilarious and sometimes grisly. A perfect example is when the Senders, after playing the legendary Rat in Boston, are invited back to a woman's apartment for salad when chaos explodes. Marcade creates real tension with his details and descriptions—one of the book's more memorable anecdotes (of which there are no shortage).

On the one hand, Marcade's narration reads like a punk rock version of *Zelig*, as he appears in anecdotes with all the era's heavy hitters. His friendship with Johnny Thunders, in particular, is an ongoing thread throughout the book. Marcade renders his anecdotes like behind-the-scenes footage of the aforementioned *Please Kill Me* and all the other canonical punk history books, lending fresh perspective to well-trodden territory. On the downside, there's an assumption that a reader is at least noddingly familiar with the principles—but if you're reading this review, chances are you have that familiarity.

I don't think this book would work as well as it does if it were *just* "I was there" stories. More important than the all-star cast is Marcade's story, as he bungles a series of relationships, struggles to establish the Senders, gets a foothold, then succumbs to heroin addiction before finally getting clean and committing it all to paper. The scene gossip and the larger through line are well-balanced.

Punk Avenue is a fast, fun read that fills in historical gaps and establishes Phil Marcade as more than a character lurking in the shadows. Fans of CBGB and American punk will dig it. –Michael T. Fournier (Three Rooms Press, 561 Hudson St. #33, New York, NY 10014, threeroomspress.com)

Spoke
Compiled by Scott Crawford, 128 pgs.

Spoke is a big book in scale and size. A square, hardcover, coffee table-esque book, *Spoke* serves as the printed companion to Scott Crawford's documentary, *Salad Days,* about the Washington D.C. punk scene in the 1980s. The range of acts is what you'd expect: primarily Dischord Records bands with a few odds and ends (including Black Market Baby and Bad Brains). The book is structured with each band getting approximately three pages, which is comprised of an introduction, photographs, and oral history of each.

The strongest aspect of *Spoke* is the photographs. There are a plethora of amazing live photos. Each picture consistently shows the bands at their seemingly fiercest or most emotional. It's as though Crawford was a king, sitting on his throne and with a wave of his hand he said to his minions, "Bring me the best live photos of these bands." And boy, did they come through! Additionally, there are still shots of band members hanging out or being silly, which gives a fuller picture of the band.

My critique of the book is with the oral history. I haven't seen *Salad Days,* so perhaps each group is covered more in depth in the film. But only giving three or four pages to each of these acts seemed like short shrift. The content generally focused on conflict, too, which was an interesting take. So many of these bands got together, did a few tours, recorded an album or two, and then imploded. Acts exchanged members frequently. In many regards, it left me feeling that the importance wasn't so much about this band or that band (although Bad Brains basically began the D.C. scene and Minor Threat put it on the map), as it was about all these bands coming together to form something comprehensive—a scene, if you will. In reading *Spoke,* I read very little about the overarching theme of what the scene was about. There was no essay or narrative that brought everything together.

One thing that was clear about the D.C. scene was that it was heavily focused on men. In some sense it was what it was, but beyond Fire Party were there really no bands comprised of women? I noticed some bands had people of color, but it would've been interesting to see a discussion of cultural, racial, and gender dynamics in the scene, especially considering how political the community was.

If one is interested in the history of D.C. hardcore and punk, another Akashic Books title, *Dance of Days,* would be a suitable alternative. In the case of *Spoke,* perhaps a book comprised solely of photographs of the D.C. scene with a few captions would've been more appropriate. As it stands,

it's an interesting piece of work, and definitely worth looking through, but ultimately doesn't add much that hasn't already been covered. –Kurt Morris (Akashic, 232 Third St., Suite A115, Brooklyn, NY 11215)

Streetopia
Edited by Erick Lyle, 320 pgs.

Dystopian lit and film are in vogue—stores and libraries are having a hard time keeping *1984* and *Handmaid's Tale* on the shelves. But as *Streetopia* editor Erick Lyle notes, the flip side of the coin is the idea of utopia, which questions "when does the nonfunctional and intolerable status quo, endured for years, suddenly become *an emergency* that must be dealt with immediately at all costs?" In other words, when is enough *enough* and what can be done? Resistance isn't the question; *how* to resist is. What works? What doesn't? And what counts? Monitoring social feeds for petitions? Leaving your phone at home and masking up? Deleting an app from your phone? Making calls?

Think piece after think piece have clotted webpages and newspapers since the election, arguing efficacy and viability of all the above and then some. Perhaps the real solution can be seen in this anthology edited by Erick Lyle, the longtime editor of *Scam* zine (the new issue of which I've reviewed elsewhere herein).

Lyle was a longtime resident of Miami before moving to the Bay Area years back. Both towns suffered the same sort of gentrification (one that's now spread to Las Vegas): in an effort to attract money, cookie-cutter "arts districts" with unaffordable rents that pushed communities out of longtime neighborhoods. In San Francisco, the Tenderloin was the focus of this redevelopment.

How best to resist this? Lyle and his vast cohort of artists, writers, musicians, and community activists decided to show the value of the Tenderloin and its residents by starting a free street festival/art show in a local gallery showcasing their talent. It's difficult to succinctly summarize the full ambition and drive involved in the anti-privatization, anti-gentry extravaganza that followed as anything less than inspirational: five full weeks of exhibits and showcases demonstrating the diverse talent and vision of the neighborhood's residents.

I'm an ex-restaurant guy, so the chapter that resonated with me the most was with Sy Wagon, who for five weeks ran the Free Café, serving donated food to as many as ninety Tenderloin residents a day. Her section highlights the efforts of ordinary neighborhood people coming together to do something beneficial. After all, what's more communal—more utopian—than a bunch of people eating meals together?

Much of *Streetopia* is a series of interviews with the festival's principles. If this book has a weakness, it's the occasional disjointedness of repetition, as different writers cover the same introductory points. This is easily overlooked, though, as they're a diverse and talented group with a wide range of opinions and talents, the idea of utopia connecting them all. Artist Brontez Purnell, writer Rebecca Solnit, and musician Ivy Jeanne McLelland all make appearances.

The message of *Streetopia* is a powerful one: the best resistance is to harness and nurture community. In the dark days following the election, this book was (and is) soothing and deeply inspirational. –Michael T. Fournier (Booklyn, 37 Greenpoint Ave., 4th Fl., Brooklyn, NY 11222, booklyn.org)

Resistance isn't the question; *how* to resist is.

–Michael T. Fournier | *Streetopia*

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